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THE HARROWING OF HELL

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

RELIGION: ITS ORIGIN AND FORMS

THE CHILDHOOD OF FICTION

THE MISTY ISLE OF SKYE

EARLY CHRISTIAN VISIONS OF THE OTHER WORLD

THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT CELTS

CELTIC MYTHOLOGY

EDDIC MYTHOLOGY

THE HARROWING OF HELL

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AN EARLY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

BY

J. A. MACCULLOCH, D.D.

CANON OF S. NINIAN'S CATHEDRAL, PERTH, AND
HON. CANON OF THE CATHEDRAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, CUMBRAE

'Every place has need of Christ.'—ORIGEN

Edinburgh: T. & T. CLARK, 38 George Street
1930

13402

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
MORRISON AND GIBB LIMITED

FOR

T. & T. CLARK, EDINBURGH

LONDON: SIMPKIN MARSHALL, LIMITED
NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

June 1968 52210 Blackwell

TO

THE MEMORY OF ALL WHOM
'I HAVE LOVED AND LOST
AWHILE' AND OF ALL, FRIENDS
ON LIFE'S WAY, WHO HAVE
ENTERED INTO REST
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

PREFACE

The title chosen for this book, 'The Harrowing of Hell'—the spoliation of the hollow Underworld known now as Hell, now as Hades, by Christ—was much favoured by medieval English writers as a description of our Lord's Descent into Hades and its results.

The numerous references in early theological writings to the Descent, as well as popular works like *The Gospel of Nicodemus* or *The Book of the Resurrection*, which describe it and show our Lord as the glorious Conqueror of the Underworld, prove how strong was the curiosity regarding the period between His Death and His Resurrection. The same curiosity is found regarding the other unrecorded part of His life—His Boyhood and Youth. That 'subterranean life,' as Renan calls it, was fully described. In later times few works were more popular in many European languages than *The Gospel of Nicodemus*. Its incidents are constantly referred to in literature. Legend was busy with it. Poets turned it into verse, and dramatists made use of it.[1] Artists transcribed it on canvas, on painted window, or in stone.

In our own time the reconstruction of our views regarding the Other World gives the doctrine of the Descent a new importance. The purpose of this book is to inquire into the sources of the doctrine, to show, by a preliminary study of kindred

[1] See *The Harrowing of Hell*, a Middle English text, in vol. 100 of The Early English Text Society's publications, extra series.

beliefs, that it answered to a widespread human desire, and to suggest that, if we can no longer accept it in its older form, the doctrine of the Harrowing of Hell still has elements of abiding value.

J. A. MacCULLOCH.

The Rectory,
The Bridge of Allan,
June 1930.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Preface vii

List of Works xi

Abbreviations xiii

CHAP.

I. The Other World 1

II. Descent to rescue a Dead Relative . . . 13

III. Descent to obtain a Boon 21

IV. Descent to free the Damned 28

V. The Descent to Hades in the Apostolic Writings . 45

VI. The Descent in the Creeds and the Church Orders 67

VII. Patristic References to the Descent . . . 83

VIII. The Descent in Apocryphal Writings . . . 131

IX. The Gospel of Nicodemus 152

X. Homilies ascribed to Eusebius of Alexandria . 174

XI. The Easter Eve Homily ascribed to Epiphanius . 192

XII. The Deception of Satan 199

XIII. The Breaking of the Gates of Hades . . . 217

XIV. The Victory over Death and Hades . . . 227

XV. The Preaching in Hades 240

XVI. The Release of Souls from Hades . . . 253

XVII. The Resurrection of the Saints 288

CHAP. PAGE
XVIII. The Gnostic Version of the Descent . . . 300
XIX. The Origin of the Tradition of the Descent . 312
XX. The Permanent Value of the Descent Doctrine . 320
Additional Notes 327
Index 349

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(Those quoted frequently in the text are mentioned in the Notes by the Author's name only)

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the Notes:

EBi . . *Encyclopædia Biblica.* London, 1899–1903.

ERE. . Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.* Edinburgh, 1908–1921.

JTS . . *Journal of Theological Studies.* Oxford, 1900 f.

PG . . Migne's *Patrologia Græca.*

PL . . Migne's *Patrologia Latina.*

TCHR . *Transactions of the Third International Congress for the History of Religions.* Oxford, 1909.

TS . . *Texts and Studies.* Cambridge, 1891 f.

TU . . *Texte und Untersuchungen.* Leipzig, 1884 f.

THE HARROWING OF HELL

CHAPTER I

THE OTHER WORLD

The belief in the possibility of descent to the Underworld and return thence is widespread, and is illustrated by numerous myths, some of which are of remote origin. The question at once arises whether the story of our Lord's Descent to Hades is mythical and whether its origin is to be traced to such pagan myths. If not, if the story symbolizes actual experiences of His in the state of the dead, has it received any colouring from pagan sources? Obviously only certain Descent myths, Semitic, Egyptian, or Hellenic, could have exerted such a formative or colouring influence. But for purposes of comparison and to show how widespread and human all such myths are, many others are here outlined. They may serve to show how inadequate is myth by itself to account for the Descent story. One important difference between such Descent myths and the Christian beliefs should be noted here. The person who descends and returns is almost invariably a divinity or a living person, seldom or never the soul of one dead who returns to actual life.

These myths are connected with man's ideas of death and of the region of the dead, joined to his affection for those lost through death. While yet the dead were believed to live in the grave or to hover round their old haunts, a living man saw

them in dream, trance, or hallucination, and believed that they had come to him or that his spirit had gone forth to them. So, when a separate region of the dead was conceived, men thought that they visited it in trance or dream, or those who had been thought to be dead, but had revived, told how they had been there and were permitted to return. Preconceived notions of that region coloured such dreams, but these dreams in turn gave support or added to current beliefs about it. The Kamtchadals knew about their Other World because, they said, the first man died, went there, and returned to tell about it.[1] Among the Andamanese, who think that no one can leave *chaitan*, or Hades, accounts of it are supported by saying that in old days a seer had a vision of it.[2] Such visions, widespread as they are, must have had great influence on belief. Nor was there anything improbable in dream or trance visits, since the nature of death is never fully understood by savages, and the division between life and death is slight. Universal folk-belief tells of the restoration to life of the dead or dismembered.[3] The soul leaves the body in illness and may start on the way to Hades. When a Melanesian faints, his soul has begun the journey to Panoi, but the ghosts send him back, for his time is not come.[4] So the Andamanese think that in serious illness the soul hovers between earth and Hades.[5]

But in considering the origin of mythic Descents to Hades, affection must also be taken into account. Generally, savages fear the dead, but affection sometimes overcomes fear and there is a desire to commune with them. An Australian black-

[1] G. W. Steller, *Beschreibung von dem Lande Kamtschatka*, Frankfort, 1774, p. 271.

[2] E. H. Man, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xii. 162.

[3] See my *Childhood of Fiction*, chapters iii., iv., and cf. the myths of Attis, Zagreus, and Osiris.

[4] R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, Oxford, 1891, p. 266.

[5] Man, *op. cit.* xii. 162.

fellow of the Chepara tribe said feelingly that his child appeared to him in sleep the night after her death, and that once in illness he felt her near, so that he slept soundly, and next morning was better. This instance is almost Tennysonian :

> 'thro' a lattice on the soul
> Looks thy fair face and makes it still.'

While the division between life and death was believed to be slight, and that souls of the dying or dead might be recalled, affection would easily suggest that, if men could go in dreams to the Other World, they might also go while awake to rescue the dead. From possibility to fact was an easy step to the primitive mind. Thus accounts of visions of the Other World easily passed into tales of visits thither, the savage believing that in dreams his soul leaves his body and goes to the place of which he dreams. Stories of visits to Hades to recover a dead wife, lover, or friend, were credible, because the way or entrance thither was often known, even if the road was difficult. Examples of such local entrances are found in Polynesian, Melanesian, African, Eskimo, Chinese, and Ainu belief. There were many of them in Greece and Italy, some of them the scene of mythical Descents. Medieval Christianity also knew entrances to Purgatory or Hell, *e.g.* volcanoes like Etna, the cave in an island on Lough Dearg (S. Patrick's Purgatory), the 'vale perilous' in the kingdom of Prester John.[1] The belief is still found in Brittany, where it is thought that Hell can be reached by a journey.[2]

Dream or trance visits were probably the first subject of story, soon to be succeeded by tales of actual Descent. In early times, as in actual savage life, there must have been many stories

[1] Tertullian, *de Pœnit.* 12 ; Gregory the Great, *Dialogues.*

[2] A. Le Braz, *La Légende de la mort*[2], Paris, 1902, i. pp. xxx, xxxix ; cf. the local entrances to fairy-land.

of visits to Hades, just as the Zulus tell of men who have gone there by holes in the ground. With the advance of religious ideas, such stories were usually told less of actual men than of divine heroes or of deities. All such stories of Descent have parallels in those of Ascent to a heavenly region.[1]

Tylor maintains that such Descents were suggested by the sun as it descended to the Underworld and its return at dawn.[2] But, though this may have coloured later myths, it was rather man's dream experiences which gave rise to the tales. Some, again, connect the myths of Ištar and Tammuz, of Dionysos and Semele, of Orpheus and Eurydice, with the myth and ritual of the death and revival of vegetation deities, and find their origin in these. Miss Harrison says: 'Any one who realizes Orpheus [whom she regards as an historic personage] at all would feel that the intrusion of desperate emotion puts him out of key. Semele, the green earth, comes up from below year by year; with her comes her son Dionysos, and by a certain instinct of chivalry, men said that he had gone to fetch her. The mantle of Dionysos descends on Orpheus.'[3] This reverses the order of things. Similar tales are elsewhere told of personages unconnected with vegetation, while Eurydice, unlike Semele, does not rise again. Such tales in Babylonia and Greece might easily be joined to myths of vegetation deities who were believed to die and revive.[4]

Knowledge of the conditions of Other World life is often connected with stories about those who had gone there and

[1] See *ERE* ii. 686; E. S. Hartland, *The Science of Fairy Tales*, London, 1891, p. 224 f.; W. Scott, *Demonology and Witchcraft*, ed. 1898, p. 29; J. J. v. Görres, *Die Christliche Mystik*, book v. chapter v.; MacCulloch, *Early Christian Visions of the Other World*.

[2] *Primitive Culture*, ii. 48.

[3] *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*[2], p. 603.

[4] For another theory connecting Descent myths with supposed death and revival in Initiation rites, see A. van Gennep, *Les Rites de passage*, Paris, 1909, p. 131.

returned. The Zulus possess many such stories, *e.g.* that of Uncana who, following a porcupine down a hole, reached the land of the dead. When he came back, people said of him: 'There is the man who went to the underground people,'[1] just as Dante was pointed to as the man who had been in Hell. Knowledge of the Other World comes also from those subject to catalepsy or who have fallen into a trance. These states are hardly distinguishable from death by the savage, and people who revive from them are held to have died and come to life again, the people of New Britain believing that friendly spirits have sent them back to earth.[2] Others are sent back by the Lord of Hades, often because they are said to have died before their time. The minds of such patients being haunted by current ideas of Hades, they relate as actual experiences of a visit there what are really their own preconceptions regarding it, coloured by dream fancies. Marogus, a New Guinea native, after reviving from a trance, said that he had been to Tuma and had seen its Lord and the shades who have gardens there. They had sent him back, but if he had eaten or smoked with them, he could not have returned.[3] A New Zealand native who had been buried was found alive, and told how he had been in Reinga, where his relatives bade him not touch food and sent him back to earth. He described the delights of the Underworld, its food, its dwellers, its villages, all of which corresponded to what the gods had told to men when they visited the earth.[4] Vivid dreams of the Other World may sometimes be the result of auto-suggestion: some

[1] H. Callaway, *Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus*, London, 1868, i. 316. See also A. Werner, *African Mythology*, Boston, 1925, chapters iv. and v. (*Mythology of All Races*, vol. vii.).

[2] G. Brown, *Melanesians and Polynesians*, London, 1910, p. 193.

[3] C. J. Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, Cambridge, 1910, p. 734. Cf. Codrington, p. 278; G. Brown, pp. 191, 193, 221.

[4] E. Shortland, *Maori Religion and Mythology*, London, 1882, p. 45.

natives claim to be able to project their soul into it when they please.[1] Trance visits are also known at higher levels of civilization, and circumstantial stories, all greatly alike, are told of these—Greek, Roman, Chinese, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian.[2] S. Augustine's story of Curma tells how he had been called by death instead of Curma the smith, and was restored to earthly life when the mistake was discovered, and after he had seen the Other World. This is a stereotyped tale, repeated by Gregory the Great of two men called Stephen, one of them a smith, and it has variants elsewhere.[3]

Many trance experiences are found as folk-tales. Thus a Maori woman is said to have told how her spirit descended to Reinga, which is like this world. Her father's spirit met her and sent her back to her child, bidding her beware of the food of Reinga. She was pursued by two spirits as she left, but escaped them by throwing down sweet potatoes which they stayed to eat.[4] In a story from the Hervey Islands the spirit of a man, apparently dead, went to Hades, but, by a stratagem, he escaped being eaten by Meru, its queen, who sent him back to earth.[5] A Japanese tale relates that Ono-no-Kimi died and went to Hades, but was sent back by its ruler because his earthly life was not complete.[6] Many stories of dream visits to Hades are known to the American Indians, with elaborate descriptions of that region, based on current beliefs, and recounting the dangers of the way, the narrow bridge spanning

[1] Seligmann, p. 653.

[2] Plato, *Repub.* x. (vision of Er); Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* vii. 52; Plutarch, *de Tard. Just. Div.* (story of Thespesios); W. G. Aston, *Shinto*, London, 1905, p. 181; L. Wieger, *Folk-lore chinois moderne*, 1909, pp. 184 f., 287 f.; L. Scherman, *Geschichte der Indiens Visionslitt.*, Leipzig, 1892, pp. 91 ff.

[3] Aug. *de Cura pro Mortuis*, 12; Greg. *Dialogues*, iv. 36. Oriental parallels in Scherman.

[4] E. Shortland, *Tales and Superstitions of the New Zealanders*, London, 1856, p. 150.

[5] W. W. Gill, *Myths and Songs from the S. Pacific*, London, 1876, p. 172.

[6] L. Hearn, *Unfamiliar Japan*, London, 1894, i. 68.

the river of death, and the life of the spirits.[1] Savage medicine-men often claim the power of projecting their souls into the Other World. The Eskimo *angekok* is bound and, during a séance, visits the spirits in Hades. Then he is found unbound and relates his experiences.[2] A Melanesian wizard sent his soul to Panoi in a trance and spoke with the dead on behalf of anxious relatives, but could not bring them back to earth. This wizard power is accepted in Melanesia, and there are burlesque parodies of Descent stories, *e.g.* to a pig Paradise ruled by a snake.[3] Similar tales and practices exist in North America. Three Chinook shamans project their souls in a state of clairvoyance into the Other World on the track of a sick man's soul. Danger is avoided by magical chants and, when the soul is caught, they restore it to the patient. If the soul has drunk of the well of the dead or eaten their food, there is no return.[4] With the Twana Indians the descent of shamans to rescue souls is the subject of a pantomime. The ground is broken up, and when the performers are supposed to have reached the bottom, they go on to the land of spirits. Then, after much noise and struggling, they seize the lost souls and return with them to their owners.[5] Sorcerers in Borneo, after visiting the Other World, show a piece of wood or stone given them by the spirits, and claim the aid of a friendly spirit when they search for wandering souls.[6] Among the Karens, necro-

[1] H. R. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, Philadelphia, 1853–56, iii. 233; H. B. Alexander, *North American Mythology*, Boston, 1916, *passim* (*Mythology of All Races*, vol. x.).

[2] O. Cranz, *Hist. of Greenland*, 1820, p. 269. Cf. MacCulloch, 'Shamanism,' in Hastings' *ERE* xi. 441 ff.

[3] Codrington, p. 286.

[4] L. Spence, 'Chinooks,' *ERE* iii. 562.

[5] *Annual Report*, Smithsonian Inst. for 1887, part i. p. 677. For a séance representing a visit to Ghost Land by members of the Kwakiutl Ghost Society, see F. Boas, *Report*, U.S. Nat. Museum, Washington, 1897, p. 482.

[6] *L'Anthropologie*, x. 728; *Journ. Anth. Inst.* xxxii. 81.

mancers go to the unseen world to find the soul of a sick man.[1] Buriat shamans also descend to Hades to recover souls stolen by Erlik, its Lord, but sometimes must procure for him the soul of a friend of the sufferer in exchange.[2] In Siberia the shaman conducts souls of the dead to the Underworld, securing for them a favourable reception by gifts of brandy.[3] With this may be compared the Melanesian custom. Two men sleep beside a corpse the night after death, and their spirits accompany the dead man's spirit to *Matana nion*. Betel-nut is offered them but is refused, for if they took it they could not return to tell of the scenery and conditions of life there, and the torments inflicted on the soul.[4] Here and elsewhere preconceived ideas or some kind of auto-suggestion aid the form of the dream. Thus in New Guinea a man asserts that in sleep he can send his soul after some ceremony to and from the Other World as he pleases. He ate no food there until he had made several visits, lest he should never return.[5]

Dreams of Hades were doubtless known to the ancient world and seem to have been induced for religious ends. At the sanctuary of Lebadeia the inquirer, after due ritual, descended to an underground region where he was perhaps shown scenic representations of Hades, or under the influence of mephitic vapours or narcotics slept and dreamt of what he deemed to be realities—Tartarus and Elysium, to judge by the vision of Timarchos.[6] Visions, induced or ecstatic, or the witnessing of a liturgical drama of the future life, occurred in the mysteries of Isis. Lucius 'approached the confines of death and trod on the threshold of Persephone . . . and drew near

[1] Mason, *Journ. As. Soc. of Bengal*, xxxix. 201.
[2] Mikhailovskii, *Journ. Anthrop. Inst.* xxiv. 69.
[3] W. Radloff, *Aus Siberien*, Leipzig, 1884, ii. 52 f.
[4] Brown, *op. cit.* p. 193.
[5] Seligmann, *op. cit.* p. 653.
[6] Plutarch, *de Gen. Socr.* 21 f.; Pausanias, ix. 39. 5 f.

to the presence of the gods of the lower and higher worlds.'[1] A literary use was made of dream experiences, and there are many accounts of visions of the Other World or visits to it, *e.g.* the visit of Odysseus, Plato's story of Er the Pamphylian, Plutarch's stories of Thespesius and Antyllos, the visit of Æneas, Lucian's story of Cleodemes,[2] as well as burlesque descriptions of these—the visit of Dionysos in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes and that of Menippus, told by Lucian. Scenes of Homer's Hades were painted at Delphi by Polygnotus: those of the Egyptian Underworld were dramatically presented by Egyptian and Nubian actors at Rome in 41 A.D.[3]

An Egyptian papyrus of the first century A.D. contains a story, probably of far earlier date, of the Descent of the high priest of Memphis, Setne Khamuas (*c.* 1250 B.C.), to the Té or Duat, guided by his son, where he saw the judgment of souls and the various halls of Amenti or Hades, and the state of righteous, wicked, or neutral souls there.[4] Hinduism and Buddhism have many stories of Other World visions or visits, perhaps based on dreams induced by meditation and asceticism, and shaped in accordance with current beliefs. They supported these beliefs and may have been regarded as reminiscences of experiences in previous existences. Or they are told of people who fell into a trance, or whose souls were summoned too soon from earth and permitted to return.[5] In later

[1] Apuleius, *Metam.* book xi. There is no evidence that scenic representations of the Other World were part of the Mysteries at Eleusis. See L. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 179 f.

[2] Plutarch, *de Tard. Just. Div.*; Eusebius, *Præp. Evan.* xi. 36; Plato, *Repub.* x. 614B f.; Lucian, *Philops.* 25. See E. Rohde, *Psyche*, Tübingen, 1925, *passim*; and A. Dieterich, *Nekyia*, Leipzig, 1893.

[3] Paus. x. 28. 4; E. Renan, *Antichrist*, p. 84.

[4] F. L. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis*, Oxford, 1900, pp. 45 ff.

[5] Scherman, *op. cit.* pp. 91 ff.

Parsism the *Book of Ardâ Virâf* relates how this pious priest was selected by lot to take a narcotic, so that his soul might go from this world to the next and bring back a report of the conditions there. The bliss of the righteous and the torments of the wicked are described in this book, which is still read and accepted by Parsis.[1]

In later Judaism the authors of such works as the *Book of Enoch* and the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* describe visits to Sheol and the various Heavens, with their divisions for the righteous and the wicked. Such narratives served the purpose of teaching a dogmatic eschatology and urging men to live righteously. It is worth noting that Plutarch's Thespesios, after his experiences in the Other World, is said to have reformed his ignoble life, as did Pope Gregory's monk Peter, whose visit to Hell is described in his *Dialogues*, and many of the visionaries in Cæsarius of Heisterbach's entertaining *Dialogus Miraculorum*.

In Christian history there are records of genuine visions such as have been experienced by the devout and the imaginative in all ages and based on recollections of what had been heard or read, as Tertullian shows of a female visionary known to him.[2] Such are the visions of SS. Perpetua and Saturus, with their reminiscences of passages in canonical or apocryphal Scriptures.[3] But there are many literary versions of visions or visits to Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, perhaps based on these, but often borrowing from Pagan or Jewish sources. This borrowing is most marked in the description of the divisions of Hades (found also in Egyptian, Oriental, and Jewish visions), and in the frequent mention of the narrow Bridge of the Dead,

[1] Ed. M. Haug and E. W. West, Bombay, 1872. Several editions of the work exist in prose and verse.

[2] Tertullian, *de Anima*, 9.

[3] J. A. Robinson, 'Passio S. Perpetuæ,' in *TS*, Cambridge, 1892, i. part ii.

an early notice of which is found in Pope Gregory's *Dialogues*.[1] The prototype of all these Christian visions is that in the *Apocalypse of Peter* (*c.* 100–150 A.D.), on which many later visions are based. Such stories, which, with wearisome iteration, tell how the seer or visitor or the soul of a dead person, revived by an apostle or saint,[2] was led through the different regions, were popular in the Middle Ages, when men desired exact details of the Other World, and they were also used to enforce dogmatic teaching. But they were parodied as early as the eleventh century, and also later as in the Fabliaux, by the troubadours, and by Rabelais, who helped to discredit them.[3] Their scenes were also reproduced, *e.g.* on the walls of ancient Greek churches, just as Dante's poem influenced the subjects of Italian art from Orcagna onwards.[4]

The cave of Trophonius had its double in the Irish S. Patrick's Purgatory, exploited from at least the twelfth century. After ritual preparation, the pilgrim was allowed to enter and, in the windings of the cavern, under the influence of its vapours, he fell asleep. Generally his dreams were influenced by his preconceptions of Purgatory, but sometimes he perished in the cavern.[5] Scenic representations may have been used, and there seems to have been actual experience of bodily pains which remitted some of the future penalties. Literary accounts of visits to and visions at this famous place, beginning with

[1] *Dial.* iv. 36.

[2] See 'Acts of Thomas' and 'History of John' in W. Wright, *Apoc. Acts of Apostles*, London, 1871, ii. 23, 149; E. A. Wallis Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, London, 1904, i. 268; 'Preaching of Andrew' and 'Story of John' in A. S. Lewis, *Mythol. Acts of Apostles*, London, 1904, pp. 7, 163.

[3] E. du Méril, *Poésies pop. lat. antérieures au 12me siècle*, Paris, 1843, pp. 290 ff.; T. Wright, *S. Patrick's Purgatory*, London, 1844, p. 47; W. E. H. Lecky, *Hist. of European Morals*[9], 1890, ii. 232; Rabelais, book ii. chapter xxx

[4] See Heuzey, 'Les Supplices d'enfer d'après les peintures byzantines, in *Ann. de l'Assoc. pour l'encour. des Études grecques*, Paris, 1871, pp. 114 ff.

[5] T. Wright, *op. cit.* pp. 139, 153, 185. See also St. John S. Seymour, *Saint Patrick's Purgatory*, Dundalk, 1918.

that of the Descent of Owain in 1153 by Henry of Sawtry, had a great vogue in Europe.[1]

History has thus repeated itself in Paganism and in Christianity. First, genuine dreams of the Other World; then literary versions of these, often with a didactic purpose; then artistic or scenic representations or the inducing of visions by artificial means; and lastly burlesques and parodies.

To conclude, we may note that the Norse *Solarliodh*, of the eleventh or twelfth century, ascribed to Saemundr, describes a son's vision of his dead father, who tells of the places of torment and the joys of Heaven. Pagan and Christian ideas are curiously mingled, as if the poet held two faiths at once, or was a heathen with glimpses of Christianity.[2]

[1] English and French versions in D. Laing, *Owain Miles*, Edinburgh, 1837; Marie de France, *Poésies*, ed. B. de Roquefort, Paris, 1820, vol. ii.

[2] G. Vigfusson and E. Y. Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, Oxford, 1883, i. 202 ff.

CHAPTER II

DESCENT TO RESCUE A DEAD RELATIVE

Stories relating of a Descent to rescue a dead relative are by far the most numerous and interesting. Other motives for Descent to the Underworld are also found—to seek a boon, to satisfy curiosity, or, in some of the higher religions, to enlighten the dead or free them from torment. We study the first of these topics in this chapter.

The pathetic stories of Descent to rescue a dead relative show man's belief that love is stronger than death, and savage examples are quite as touching as those from higher mythologies. Many of them occur among the American Indians, Polynesians, and Melanesians.

A Wyandot Indian went to the Land of Souls to recover his sister. An old man met him and gave him a calabash in which to put her spirit. After some failures he caught her, and, on his return, summoned his friends to witness the revival of her dead body. But a woman opened the calabash, and the spirit flew back to the Land of Souls. There are many versions of this story, and generally through curiosity or the breaking of a tabu, *e.g.* looking at the process of reanimation when that has been forbidden, the spirit escapes.[1] In some stories a

[1] Schoolcraft, *op. cit.* ii. 235; Alexander, *op. cit.* pp. 50, 118, 147, 236, 264, 302; R. M. Dorman, *Primitive Superstitions*, Philadelphia, 1881, p. 43; J. F. Lafitau, *Mœurs des sauvages amer.*, Paris, 1724, i. 402; Charency, *Le Folk-lore dans les deux mondes*, Paris, 1894, pp. 286 ff.; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, iii. 530–31; Hastings' *ERE* ii. 685, iii. 561.

woman's spirit is allowed to return to her husband, either with or without his visiting the Land of Souls; but again he loses her, or he himself dies through breaking a tabu.[1] There is some resemblance here to the Greek myth of Protesilaus and Laodamia, as well as to many European tales and ballads of the Dead Wife group, in which a mother returns to nurse her child and is sometimes captured by the husband.[2]

In a Polynesian tale a woman falls into Avaiki or Hades, and her husband descends to release her. He hears her crying in the hut where she is imprisoned and bids her escape, while he remains for a time, imitating her voice, and then flees. The spirits pursue, but the husband, catching up his wife, escapes with her just in time.[3] A beautiful Maori story, with Hawaian, Samoan, and other Polynesian variants, tells of Pané, who died of love for Hutu. Hutu prayed to the gods, who showed him the way to Reinga and bade him eat no food there. He amused the spirits by making them sit on the top of a tree fastened to the ground. When the rope was released, they were shot up into the air. Finally Pané appeared and sat on the tree with her lover. When the rope was freed, it caught in the creepers far above, and up these Hutu escaped with her to earth. A similar story is known in different parts of Melanesia where other Orpheus tales are also found.[4] A woman descended to Panoi to see her brother, giving herself first a 'death-like smell' by rubbing herself with water in which a dead rat had been placed. She was regarded as a ghost, and spoke with her brother, who bade her refuse the food of Panoi, lest she

[1] *Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, Washington, iv. 103; Bancroft, iii. 531.

[2] See my *Childhood of Fiction*, London, 1905, pp. 42 ff.; Sandys' trans. of Ovid, *Metam.*, Oxford, 1632, p. 354, and the Maori tale, p. 6, *supra*.

[3] Gill, *op. cit.* p. 221 f.

[4] K. M. Clarke, *Maori Tales*, London, 1896, pp. 1 ff.; R. B. Dixon, *Oceanic Mythology*, Boston, 1916, pp. 76 ff. (*Mythology of All Races*). Cf. Clarke, p. 126, for a story, of a chief who tried to recover his wife.

should be detained there. Another tale is of a wizard who descended in spirit, taking with him a man who desired to recover his wife and who used a similar method of simulating death. He begged her to return, but she said this was impossible, but gave him an armlet for remembrance. He seized her hand and would have dragged her away, but the hand came off, for in Panoi ghosts have a substantial frame.[1]

At higher levels such stories are told as myths of the gods. The Japanese goddess, 'The Female who Invites,' died and went to Yomi or Hades. Her brother-husband, 'The Male who Invites,' followed her and asked her to return. She told him that he had come too late, for she had eaten the food of Yomi, but nevertheless she would consult the deities. Meanwhile he must not look at her. Impatient at her absence, he lit one of the teeth of his comb and found her rotting. He thus put her to shame, and she sent 'The Ugly Female of Hades' to pursue him; but he stayed her by casting articles behind him, which, changing to food, she stopped to eat. His wife now sent other deities after him, whom he vanquished, and then pursuing him herself, her way was blocked by him with a great rock. She is now the great goddess of Yomi.[2]

Stories of visits to the Underworld are frequent in African mythology and folk-lore, but only a few tell of the recovery of the dead. A Wachaga widow lost her only son, and made her way to the gate where earth and sky meet, the entrance to the Underworld. Through her importunity the Chief of the ghosts agreed to restore her son, and on returning home she found him awaiting her.[3] In Wachaga belief a man in the old days could

[1] Codrington, *op. cit.* pp. 277, 286. For other S. Pacific tales see A. Bastian, *Allerlei aus Völks- und Menschenkunde*, Berlin, 1888, i. 8, 111 f.

[2] *Ko-ji-ki*, tr. B. H. Chamberlain, supplement to *Transactions of the As. Soc. Japan*, x. 34 f. The myth contains the *Märchen* formula of the Transformation Flight, already met with in a Maori tale, p. 6, *supra*.

[3] A. Werner, *op. cit.* p. 184.

enter the Ghost Land and tell his dead children that he feared the extinction of his line. This practice became so common that two of the entrances were closed, and the third was finally lost to human knowledge. The father would see children passing, his own among them, led by a guardian. He was asked whether he would pass through the 'sewage door' or the 'sugar-cane door.' If he chose the latter, he found his way home only to die, but if the former, he found himself in his house. Nothing is said of the children, but they may have been recovered or reborn soon after.[1]

In Babylonia the poem of the Descent of Ištar into Aralû contains elements of ancient origin, and some claim it as a source of the Christian Descent story. Ištar demands entrance to 'the land whence there is no return.' She has come to weep over heroes who have left wives, and over Tammuz, untimely lost. By order of Allatu, queen of Hades, she is stripped of dress and ornaments at each of its seven gates and struck with disease. There is now desolation on earth, life dies away, and the gods lament her disappearance. Ea creates Uddushunamir and sends him to Aralû to demand the Water of Life as a preliminary to Ištar's release. Allatu is compelled to cause Ištar to be sprinkled with it. She is led back, and at each gate her garments and ornaments are restored. The story, as connected with Tammuz, must have told of his restoration by Ištar—an incident enacted in the Tammuz ritual; but there is only an obscure reference to him at the end of the poem in the form of ritual directions to mourners, to whom it seems addressed. Pure water is to be poured out for Tammuz, perhaps a reference to his restoration by the Water of Life. The poem may be derived from two myths: one telling how Ištar rescued Tammuz (since his restoration was celebrated annually); the other describing the rescue of Ištar from Hades

[1] Werner, pp. 195–96.

at the intervention of the gods. It bears clearer traces of the latter myth, but hints at a descent of Ištar for purposes of rescue—she descends violently and threatens to break down the gates.[1] Her recovery of Tammuz is also suggested by the fact that a Greek myth told how Aphrodite (Ištar) went down to Hades to redeem Adonis (Tammuz) from Persephone.[2] At the sanctuary of the Syrian Aphrodite sexual relations with its priestesses were supposed to ransom one from Hades, as Adonis had been freed from it.[3]

Reference may here be made to the so-called prayer of a Navajo shaman, which has a certain likeness to the Ištar myth. It is a kind of prayer-spell, describing the action of the gods as desired by the shaman. He fears that his soul may be detained by sorcery in the Underworld. The War-gods are therefore to descend and rescue it from the 'underground witch.' By magical means they pass gate after gate, sentinel after sentinel, of the Underworld, and there find the suppliant's soul. When they bring it back to him, 'the world before me is restored in beauty.'[4]

Besides the myth of Aphrodite and Adonis, the only Greek reference to the Descent of a goddess, the Greeks had several others, the best known being that of Orpheus. After the

[1] A. H. Sayce, *Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, London, 1887, pp. 221 ff.; M. Jastrow, *Rel. of Babylonia and Assyria*, Boston, 1898, pp. 563 ff., 588–89.

[2] Aristides, *Apology*, 11. Aphrodite gave a box containing the infant Adonis to the care of Persephone, who opened it and refused to give him back. Zeus ordered that he should stay with Persephone in Hades for part of the year, and with Aphrodite on earth for another part. The struggle between Aphrodite and Persephone may represent that between Ištar and Allatu, but the myth mentioned by Aristides probably refers to a Descent after his death. See Apollodorus, iii. 14. 4; J. G. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, London, 1907, p. 8; P. O. Grüppe, *Griech. Mythologie*, Munich, 1897–1906, ii. 865.

[3] Eusebius, *Vita Constant.* iii. 55; W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, Göttingen, 1907, p. 72.

[4] W. Matthews, *American Anthropologist*, 1888, vol. i.

death of Eurydice her image haunted him and he resolved to seek her in Hades. Pluto and Persephone were moved to pity, and her release was granted on condition that he should precede her and not look back till earth was reached. Just before arriving there, love overcame Orpheus: he looked back and lost Eurydice for ever. The Orphic poem, *Κατάβασις εἰς Ἅιδου*, may have had for its subject the Descent of Orpheus, or, as Foucart thinks, it was a ritual poem containing instructions for the dead in Hades, like the Orphic tablets and the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, both of which were buried with the dead.[1] In medieval poetry the myth of Orpheus became the fairy-tale of *Orfeo and Heurodis*, in which, when the King of fairy-land steals away King Orfeo's wife, he goes with his harp to the fairy kingdom, and because of his beautiful music is allowed to lead her back to earth.[2]

Dionysus was also said to have descended to bring back Semele, and, in Argive tradition, he went down through the Alcyonian Lake. His return from Hades was annually celebrated there, and the myth may have become fused with that of his 'resurrection.'[3] Another myth told how Alcestis, the wife of Admetus, having willingly died in his stead, was recovered by Heracles, who, seeing the grief of her husband and people, descended to Hades to rescue her. In a variant of this myth, Persephone is her rescuer.[4] Another myth told how Theseus agreed to assist Pirithoos in carrying off Persephone

[1] Apollod. i. 32; Virgil, *Georg.* iv.; Paus. ix. 30. 4; Ovid, *Metam.* x. See P. Foucart, *Recherches sur l'origine et la nature des mystéres d'Eleusis*, Paris, 1895, p. 7. Cf. Dieterich, *Nekyia*, pp. 128 ff. In the *Test. of the XII Patriarchs, Gad*, iv. 6, occurs the verse: 'For love would quicken even the dead and would call back them that are condemned to die.' Does this point to a knowledge of the Orpheus myth among the Jews?

[2] *Select Remains of the Early Popular Poetry of Scotland*, ed. D. Laing, Edinburgh, 1884.

[3] Paus. ii. 31. 2, 37. 5; Apollod. iii. 5. 3; Clement, *Protrep.* 2.

[4] Apollod. i. 9. 15; Hyginus, *Fab.* 50; Euripides, *Alcestis*.

from Hades. They descended, but, according to one version, were outwitted; for, expecting to receive gifts, they sat down on the chair of Forgetfulness, to which they were held fast by coils of serpents. Heracles caused the release of both when he descended to fetch Cerberus.[1]

In Scandinavian mythology, Descent myths are connected with Balder's death. Hermódr descended to Hel to obtain the release of Balder, riding for nine days through dark valleys till he reached the river Gjöll, and the bridge guarded by Módgudr. After some delay, she permitted him to pass, and at last he reached the place of the dead and saw Balder. He begged Hel to release him, but she made the release conditional on all things mourning his loss. Hermódr obtained Balder's ring as a token and returned to the gods. All things were begged to mourn, and all obeyed save the witch Thökk, who was Loke, and who said she would weep with dry eyes, and Hel would keep her prey.[2]

Hindu mythology tells of the Descent of Kriṣṇa to Yama's kingdom to demand the soul of his pupil, Sandīpani. After having conquered Yama in fight, he accomplished his purpose.[3] Not quite parallel, but showing the possibility of rescuing a dead person from Hades, is the story of Yama's marriage to Vijaya. He bade her not go near the southern part of his domain, but, tempted by curiosity, she went there and saw the wicked in torments, and among these her mother. She told Yama that she would leave him unless he released her mother, but this was done only after certain ceremonies were performed.[4]

[1] Paus. ix. 31. 5; x. 29. 9. For a euhemerized version, cf. i. 17. 4, and Plutarch, *Thes.* 31, 35; cf. also the myth of Castor and Pollux. For the Pythagorean Descent, see Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 456, and Dieterich, *Nekyia*, p. 129.

[2] *The Prose Edda*, tr. A. G. Brodeur, New York, 1916, pp. 73 ff.

[3] *Harivamsa*, v. 4913 ff., in Scherman, *op. cit.* p. 64.

[4] W. J. Wilkins, *Hindu Mythology*[2], Calcutta, 1900, p. 83.

In Tibetan Buddhism visits of mortals to Purgatory are known as De-lok, or 'the ghostly returning,' and the accounts of these are intended to teach good behaviour.[1] Maudgalyâyana learned that his mother was being tortured in the Preta-world. He set out for it, descending deeper and deeper, doors opening before him, and the demons not opposing him. He offered to take her place, but this was refused. Finally, Buddha was appealed to. He visited Hell, with the result that all the sorrowing beings were reborn in Heaven. The mother was still subjected for her sins to certain torments, but, exhorted by her son, she felt shame, and advanced by rebirth till she reached the god-region where her husband was. In another version the release is effected by following the advice of Buddha that the priests of the ten quarters should offer sacrifice for the rescue of ancestors with the repetition of certain words.[2] In a Chinese tale the Buddhist, Lo Puh, on passing into Paradise at death, realized that his mother was in Hell. He at once descended there, and by his virtues and intercessions succeeded in releasing her.[3]

The existence of such similar tales in all parts of the world is strongly suggestive not only of the possibility of similar ideas arising under similar conditions, but also of the universal desire and longing for continued communion with the dead.

[1] L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet*, London, 1895, p. 100.

[2] Scherman, *op. cit.* p. 80 f.; Waddell, p. 98. For a Chinese parallel, see J. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, London, 1880, p. 225 f.

[3] *Asiatic Journal*, xxxi. [1840] 211.

CHAPTER III

DESCENT TO OBTAIN A BOON

Myths of this class arose when once it was believed that access to the Underworld was possible, and also because it was thought that the dead, or the Lords of the Underworld, were possessors of superior knowledge. Some examples from the lower culture may be cited first. An Eskimo, to obtain good luck, was advised by his mother to raise a stone and descend through the opening below it to the Underworld, where he would obtain a piece of sealskin which would ensure his getting what he desired.[1] An Ainu story tells of a youth defrauded of his heritage, who went to Hades to get his father's help. He reached a village where he saw his father, but (in accordance with Ainu belief) he could not be heard until he entered another spirit and spoke through him. His father told him that he had left him a share, and, armed with this information, he returned to earth, when his brother restored it to him.[2] A Yoruba story records how a woman entrusted with a necklace died. It could not be found, and her sons had to make restitution. The elder son was advised by a priest to visit Dead-land, first offering sacrifice and sprinkling his eyes with lustral water in order to see the spirits. He would be allowed to enter on payment to the doorkeeper, but must not touch the dead lest he should never return. His eyes must again be sprinkled on his return in order to restore their natural vision, and a sacrifice of thanksgiving must be offered. Follow-

[1] H. J. Rink, *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo*, London, 1875, p. 461.
[2] J. Batchelor, *The Ainu of Japan*, London, 1892, p. 228.

ing this advice, he reached Dead-land and saw his mother, who told him where she had hidden the necklace. Overjoyed, he would have touched her, but she cried: 'Touch me not, my son, or the road to the world will be closed to thee for ever.' She also asked him to make frequent offerings for her, because she needed them much. This he did every fifth day, and sprinkled her grave with water.[1] The Ainu and Yoruba tales recall modern ghost stories as well as others about knowledge obtained in dream. Such dreams, regarded as experiences of the wandering soul, might produce the tales just cited.

The hero of the Esthonian epic found three girls in the cave leading to Hades, who enabled him to overcome Sarvik, Lord of Hades, by magic. Later he penetrated farther and reached the gates of Porgu (Hades), where its hosts advanced to meet him at a river of pitch crossed by a bridge. He defeated them, conquered Sarvik once more, and returned to earth with his treasures.[2] In the Finnish *Kalevala* the hero Wäinamöinen, after long travel through a forest, induced the maiden who acts as Charon to ferry him over to Tuonela (Hades), where he wished to learn certain words from its wise Lord. By avoiding the beer of Tuonela, he was able to return and describe the horrors he had seen.[3]

A Buriat myth tells how Mu-Monto went to the Other World to obtain a horse and saddle from his grandfather. There he saw groups of persons undergoing punishment, and when his grandfather gave him his boon, he explained to Mu-

[1] A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, London, 1894, p. 138 f. With the Yoruba the usual method of consulting the dead is by a kind of crystal-gazing, by which Dead-land becomes visible to the seer, *ibid.* p. 141. With the sprinkling of the eyes and its effect, cf. the fairy salve, which, rubbed on mortal eyes, makes the fairies visible.

[2] W. F. Kirby, *The Hero of Esthonia*, London, 1895, i. 100, 124.

A. Schiefner, *Kalewala*, Helsingfors, 1852, Rune 16.

Monto that these punishments were retributions for evil deeds on earth.[1]

In a Chinese story, Ting-k'ai wandered by chance into the world of the dead, where he saw a temple with a statue covered with dust, which he removed. Wandering about, he found his dead wife, who told him that she was married to an inhabitant of Hades. Now the second husband arrived and discovered the living man. 'I smell the odour of a living man,' said he, and the man was brought out from the place where the woman had hidden him, and was recognized by the other as he who had dusted the statue, really himself. For this he led him safely to earth, told him how long he had to live, and gave him the means of healing a rich man, and so obtaining a reward. He would not allow him to eat the food of Hades, which would have kept him there.[2]

A Japanese myth tells how the deity Oho-na-mochi went to Hades to seek counsel of its Lord, whose daughter he married. Her father tried to compass his death by setting him tasks, but after help from his wife and a friendly mouse, he finally escaped with the treasures of the god and forced him to give the desired advice.[3]

Herodotus relates an Egyptian story of Rhampsinitus (Ramses III.), who descended to Hades and played dice with Demeter (Isis), sometimes winning, sometimes losing. Then he returned, bringing a napkin of gold as a gift from her. The tale is not corroborated from the monuments or texts, but it may be a distorted version of Thoth's winning the five days of the epact from the moon at a game of dice. Professor Sayce

[1] D. Klementz, 'Buriats,' *ERE* iii. 9. For this and parallel tales see Uno Holmberg, *Siberian Mythology*, Boston, 1927, p. 489 (*Mythology of All Races*, vol. iv.).

[2] L. Wieger, *Folk-lore chinois moderne*, Sienhsien, 1909, p. 158 f.

[3] W. Aston, *Shinto*, p. 106; *Ko-ji-ki*, p. 71. This myth has obvious *Märchen* formulæ.

suggests that the myth may have been fathered on Rhampsinitus because of a representation on his temple of his playing dice with a woman.[1] The dead played a game with counters, and the story of Setne tells how, having descended into the tomb of Neneferkaptah for his magical book, he played draughts with him and was beaten, but eventually escaped with the book by magical means.[2]

In the *Katha-Upanishad*, Naciketas, doomed to death by his father, remained without food in the kingdom of Yama, who at last granted him fulfilment of three wishes. Naciketas wished life and reconciliation with his father, knowledge of the sacrificial fire, and knowledge of the nature of death. Yama offered him gifts if he would forgo the third wish, but he was insistent and gained it.[3]

The visit of Odysseus to the shades to inquire of Tiresias, and the Descent of Æneas to speak with Anchises, are examples of seeking a boon from the world of the dead. The myth of Psyche speaks of the tasks exacted of her before she recovered Eros, one of these being to descend to Hades and ask Persephone to fill a box with beauty for Aphrodite. The tower from which she thought to throw herself in despair bade her go to Tenarus, where was the entrance to Hades. She was to take with her in each hand bread soaked in hydromel, but no pity was to move her to take the dead man's hand which would rise from the Styx nor assist a woman who would ask her help in weaving. These would be tricks of Aphrodite to cause her to drop the bread. One piece she must give to Cerberus, and so she would reach Persephone, who will invite her to a banquet; but she must ask only for common bread. Having obtained

[1] Herod. ii. 122; Plutarch, *de Iside*, 12; Sayce, *The Ancient Empires of the East*, London, 1883, p. 92.

[2] Griffith, *op. cit.* pp. 13 ff. Cf. the obtaining of Michael Scott's magic book in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

[3] H. Oldenberg, *Buddha*, London, 1882, p. 55.

the boon she must bribe the hound of Hades with the other piece of bread. All this advice she followed and obtained the box.[1] The myth of Heracles' Descent to bring the dog Cerberus from Hades is mentioned by Homer, who says that Hermes and Athene escorted him. But it was later amplified, and we learn how he also descended by the entrance at Tenarus. After many exploits, including the liberation of Theseus, he asked Pluto for the dog. This was granted, provided he took it without weapons. On the shore of Acheron he met Cerberus, and seizing him by the throat, brought him up to earth and, after showing him to Eurystheus, who had exacted this of Heracles, took him back to Hades.[2]

Those who have seen a parallel between the labours of Heracles and the adventures of the Babylonian Gilgames, and a possible derivation of the former from the latter, point to the likeness between the journey of Heracles to Hades and that of Gilgames beyond the limits of the world, across the ocean and the Waters of Death (probably connected with the river of death in Aralu or Hades), to the Paradise of Utnapishtim to learn from him the secret of immortality.[3] In another Babylonian myth, the purpose of which may have been to show how a goddess was superseded by a god in Hades, a conflict having arisen between the gods and Erish-kigal, goddess of the Underworld, Nergal was chosen to descend thither. He passed through fourteen gates, dragged the goddess from her throne, and would have slain her. But she begged for mercy, and offered to become his wife and to give him dominion in Hades, which he accepted.[4] Not improbably, as Jastrow thinks, it

[1] Apul. *Metam.* xi. [2] Apollod. ii. 5. 12.

[3] Sayce, *The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, Edinburgh, 1902, pp. 436 ff., 446; Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 516.

[4] F. Jeremias, 'Die Babylonier und Assyrer,' in Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*[4] (ed. A. Bertholet and E. Lehmann), Tübingen, 1925, i. 567; Sayce, *op. cit.* pp. 288, 428.

was originally told of Nergal that, like Tammuz, he was carried off into Hades.[1]

In Scandinavian myth, Odin rode down to Niflhel to discover the cause of Balder's evil dreams, and reached the hall where mead was ready brewed for Balder. He roused the Sibyl from her barrow by spells, and learned from her the tidings of Balder's fate.[2] Many Celtic myths describe visits paid by heroes, not to Hades but to Elysium, to obtain the gifts of civilization.[3]

Among myths of this class there are two in the sacred writings of the Mandæans important for the study of the Christian Descent story, as it is claimed that this was influenced by, if not derived from, them. In these, however, the Descent is not to the world of the dead, since men are not yet created, but to the seven lower worlds of darkness. In one of them the Descent is before the creation of this world, and is made by the heavenly power, Hibil Ziwâ, in order to forestall the revolt of the rulers of these worlds against the powers of light. In each world Hibil Ziwâ remains many thousands of years unknown to and unseen by their Lords. When he reaches the lowest world he speaks to its Lord, the giant Krun, who partially swallows him. He cuts the giant's inwards to pieces and is disgorged. Krun is forced to give him the talisman and seal-ring by which the might of the demon who is to oppose the Lords of light will be annihilated. As he ascends he seals the door of each world, so that none can pass through. In the fourth he takes the form of its ruler, and obtains the Memra and Gemra, the secret strength of the dark worlds. By a similar change of form he learns the secrets of the third world and obtains its magic mirror. He also takes from it Ruha, daughter of its Lord,

[1] Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 586.
[2] Vigfusson and Powell, *op. cit.* i. 181 f.
[3] See my *Religion of the Ancient Celts*, Edinburgh, 1911, chapter xxiv.

pregnant with Ur, the demon who is to oppose the Lords of light. Then he reaches the Kingdom of Light and is hailed with joy. The myth ends by telling of his unseen visits to Ruha and Ur, whom he has imprisoned, his robbing Ur of his talismans, and his final conquest of him.[1] This story is full of folk-tale formulæ, some of which have been found in tales already cited. While the Descent through seven worlds recalls that of Ištar, the main incident is based on the Babylonian myth of Marduk's strife with Tiamat, the monster of chaos. The story is also connected with the so-called 'international myth' of a divine conqueror of dark powers.

The other Mandæan myth tells of a similar Descent of Mândâ d'Hajê and his conquest of Ruha and Ur. Then we learn how Ruha and her sons assemble on Mount Carmel, planning a revolt against the Lords of light. Mândâ appears among them in their own form, and they desire to make him their ruler, not realizing his real nature. He agrees on condition that they reveal to him the secrets of their mysteries. Now he shows himself in his true form and overpowers them.[2]

The main incidents in these myths—Descent to dark worlds, invisibility or change of form, and the conquest of hostile powers—recur in Gnostic Christology. How far they have influenced the Christian Descent story will be discussed later.[3]

[1] A. J. H. W. Brandt, *Mandäische Schriften*, Göttingen, 1893, pp. 138 ff.

[2] Brandt, *Die Mandäische Religion*, Leipzig, 1889, pp. 34, 38; M. Norberg, *Codex Nasaræus*, 1815–16, i. 223. For a Quiché parallel see Hastings' *ERE* iii. 308.

[3] In some tales a Descent to the Underworld is made out of mere curiosity. See Batchelor, *The Ainus*, p. 226; B. H. Chamberlain, *Ainu Folk-Tales*, London, 1888, p. 42; A. G. Morice, *The Western Dénées*, Toronto, 1889, p. 159 f.; Hastings' *ERE* ii. 709.

CHAPTER IV

DESCENT TO FREE THE DAMNED

The freeing of a soul in pain from a place of punishment has already been found in Hindu myths. This, as well as the general release of the damned or the amelioration of their torments, is a natural outgrowth of legends of rescue from Hades, but it occurs mainly in Eastern mythology. The tortures of the Greek Tartarus, the Egyptian Amenti, the hells of Hinduism, of Buddhism, and of Christianity differ but little from each other in horror and ferocity. Nevertheless all ethical religions have some bowels of mercy even in consigning sinners to torment. Hence, if it were possible to rescue one from the sad kingdom of Death, it was also possible to snatch souls from the pains of Hell. Thus arose the ideas of the cessation of torments, of transference from these to a state of bliss, of intercession by prayer and sacrament for those tormented.

Several myths of this kind are found in Hinduism and Buddhism. In the *Ramāyana*, Ravana enters Hell, and, as he enters, the darkness flees, and the damned, whom he desires to free, experience unexpected happiness. He encounters Yama in fight, and would have been beaten but for the help of Brahma, to whose will Yama bows and leaves Ravana victor.[1] In the *Mahābhārata*, Yudhisthira is subjected to a last test by the gods. When he reaches Heaven he learns that several of his relatives are in Hell, and beseeches the gods to let him share their abode. 'What is Heaven without them; only where

[1] *Ramāyana*, vii. 21 f.

they are is my Heaven!' He is conducted to Hell, and as he comes, a cool wind arises and the torments cease. He refuses to leave Hell since his presence makes its people happy. Then the gods appear, and he learns that all has been illusion, a trial of his faith.[1] In other myths those who have transgressed slightly, and are sent to Hell, suffer only formally because of their many virtues, and are given an opportunity to free the damned, *e.g.* Janika in the *Padma Purana*.[2]

The *Lalita Vistara* shows that at several moments of Buddha's existence—when he descends from Heaven, on his journey to Bodhimanda, and at Benares—a marvellous light is projected from his body which by its splendour illumines the three thousand worlds, causes all evil, suffering, and fear to cease, and fills all beings with joy, even in the Hell Avićci, the region of the Pretas, and the kingdom of Yama. Darkness is dissipated, and all beings suffering there are freed from pain and filled with joy. At Buddha's birth he prophesied that, in order to destroy the fires of Hell, he will cause rain from the great cloud of the law to fall, and all beings there will be glad. At that moment the sufferings of all in Avićci and the kingdom of Yama were appeased.[3] Great as these wonders are, it should be noted that there is no actual Descent of Buddha to Hell, and hence no preaching of his doctrine there, as is sometimes alleged.[4]

The North Buddhist legend of Avalokiteśvara, 'he who shows the damned the way to Nirvana,' furnishes the most striking instance of this group of stories. It was said in the

[1] *Mahābhārata*, xvii. ff. For a Descent of Viṣṇu with similar results to the damned, see J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies*, Oxford, 1897, p. 706.

[2] H. H. Wilson, *Journal Royal Asiatic Soc.* v. 295.

[3] *Lalita Vistara* (in *Annales du musée Guimet*, Paris, 1884, vol. vi.), pp. 51, 240, 257, 341, 79, 80.

[4] Cf. T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, London, 1878, p. 71, note, 'The Buddha is never said to have descended into Hell.'

Saddharma-Paṇḍarika (chapter xxiv.) that he would bring all misery to an end, including the torments of Yama's kingdom. To effect this, he visits the Hell Avići as a glorious prince clad in light, and frees the victims from their pains. Mild air takes the place of flames, the cauldron of boiling water in which men suffer bursts, and the sea of fire becomes a pool with lotus flowers. Hell is changed to a place of joy, and Yama shows the visitor reverence. The saving work is pursued in the city of the Pretas, where Avalokiteśvara frees its dwellers from torments, and, granting the gift of right knowledge to the damned, leads them as Bodhisattvas to the Sakhavati world.[1]

In a Chinese Buddhist myth the soul of the goddess Kwanyin visits Hell in trance and, by her invocation of Amitabha, a rain of flowers falls, the implements of torment break, Hell is changed to Paradise, and the damned return to earth. The Lords of Hell desire to hear this mighty prayer, and their wish is granted on condition that all souls attain redemption. At this point Kwanyin awakes from her trance.[2] A Tibetan myth says that when a new Tathāgata descends to the Underworld and sounds the mussel-trumpet (*i.e.* the proclamation of the sacred doctrine), all who hear its sound are saved and go to the Heaven Tashita.[3] Tibetan Buddhists, in actual practice, believe in the possibility of ritual acts performed on earth freeing a soul from the torments of Hell. These consist of offerings to the gods, the lamas, and the poor, and other services, especially the propitiation of the 'Great Pitying One,' in order that he may intercede with the King of Hell for the release of the soul.[4]

[1] E. B. Cowell, *Journ. of Philology*, vi. [1873] 222 f. For a Tibetan parallel see W. W. Rockhill, *Land of the Lamas*, London, 1891, p. 331 f.

[2] E. J. Eitel, *Three Lectures on Buddhism*, London, 1871, p. 31 ; J. J. M. de Groot, *Annales du musée Guimet*, xi. [1886] 188 f.

[3] Scherman, *op. cit.* p. 66, note 2.

[4] Waddell, *op. cit.* p. 493.

The belief in metempsychosis is sometimes utilized to show the experiences of the narrator in a former state. While in Hell, a Brahman was aware of a cessation of torture and a joy as of Paradise. This was caused by the arrival of a King, Vipaçcit, who had committed a slight fault in his earthly life. Having expiated it, he was bidden to go to Heaven, but the damned begged him to remain, because his presence relieved their miseries. Yama and Indra pled with him to go, but he demanded that his virtues should ransom sinners from Hell. He was raised to a higher state, and the Brahman who tells this story, as well as others in Hell, attained a new existence free from torture.[1]

In later Judaism similar ideas were current, sometimes in connexion with Messiah. *Bereshith Rabba* says of his appearance at the gates of Gehinnom: 'But when they that are bound, they that are in Gehinnom, saw the light of the Messiah, they rejoiced to receive him, saying, He will lead us forth from this darkness, as it is said (Hos. xiii. 14), "I will redeem them from Hell, from death I will set them free"; and so says Isaiah (xxxv. 10), "The ransomed of the Lord will return and come to Zion." By "Zion" is to be understood Paradise. And in another passage, This is that which stands written, "We shall rejoice and exult in Thee." When? When the captives climb out of Hell and the Shecinah at their head.'[2] In *Yalkut Shim'oni* the godless are rescued from Hell by the righteous dead, and pass to eternal life. The righteous appeal to God for them and are bidden to go down to Hell, to stand on their ashes and ask grace for them. Then the ashes of the wicked stand upright and they go to eternal life. According to the *Zohar* the righteous or the patriarchs are said to descend to

[1] *Mirkaṇḍeya Purana*, in Scherman, *op. cit.* pp. 38 ff.

[2] F. W. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*[2], Leipzig, 1897, p. 358; L. Bertholdt, *Christologia Judæorum*, Erlangen, 1811, pp. 170 ff.

Hell to rescue sinners from the place of torment.[1] Further examples of this from Jewish Apocalypses will be cited later.

Later Muhammadan theology also describes how righteous ones, who have safely passed the bridge which crosses Hell to Paradise, intercede for their brethren detained upon it. They are sent to Hell to see if any there have faith, and to bring them out. These are washed in the Water of Life and admitted to Paradise. The quantity of faith demanded is no more than the weight of a gold coin, but the process is repeated, and each time the amount required is reduced until it is equal to the weight of a grain of dust. God at last draws out some whose faith is not even so much as this.[2] The influence of Talmudic doctrines may be seen here.

Remission of Pain and Transference to the State of Bliss

Ideas of this kind have already been met with. They are found in the ancient Egyptian eschatology which centred in the Sun-god Ra.[3] Nightly as he passed through each region of the Underworld he brought a brief hour's joy to the souls of the dead as his light shone among them. So it is recorded in a Sinhalese Buddhist work that, when a Buddha smiles, rays of his serenity throng into Hell and bring warmth to those tortured in ice, or coolness to those tormented in fire, probably an echo of what is said in the *Lalita Vistara*.[4] When Orpheus descended to seek Eurydice, Tantalus' pursuit of the ever-retreating water ceased, the vultures' torment of Tityos was stayed, Sisyphus sat down on his rock, the daughters of Danaos

[1] A. F. Gfrörer, *Jahrhundert des Heils*, Stuttgart, 1838, ii. 77, 184; Weber, *op. cit.* p. 343.

[2] A. A. Bevan, *JTS* vi. [1904] 35.

[3] E. A. W. Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, London, 1901, iii. 193.

[4] *Avadana Tschataka*, in M. Landau, *Hölle und Fegfeuer*, Heidelberg, 1909, p. 180.

deserted their jars, Ixion and his wheel stood still, and, even more remarkable, tears flowed down the cheeks of the Erinyes, and the bark of Cerberus was quieted.[1]

But we are concerned here rather with the beneficial results of the intercession of the living for the dead. Tibetan Buddhists, as we have seen, believe in this, and such an idea is one which would occur naturally to those who feared for the fate of their beloved, and trusted in the efficacy of prayer and sacrifice.[2] Hence it is not surprising that it is already found in Judaism, as well as in popular Christianity, even before the rise of the more strictly theological conception of release from Purgatory. Indeed, that doctrine may quite likely have been influenced by popular belief and practice.

Jewish prayers and sacrifice for the dead, namely for those Jews known to have been in a state of sin at death, are found in 2 Macc. xii. 38 ff. The early use of the *Kaddisch* on Sabbaths, new moons, and feast-days shows the same belief, and it had power to shorten the time of faithful Israelites in Gehenna, since even they must remain there for a year on account of their sins. The Talmud teaches that the offerings and prayers made by the living for the dead shorten their stay in Gehenna. There was a respite of torment on the Sabbath, when an angel ordered the damned to leave Hell and spend that day between two snow-mountains. The tears of the righteous and the due performance of their prayers had also the effect of lessening the pains of Hell.[3] Prayer for the dead Adam by angels and the living occurs in the *Apocalypse of Moses*.[4] The *Apocalypse*

[1] Ovid, *Metam.* x. 41. Claudian, *de Raptu Proserp.* ii. 325 f., describes a similar cessation of torments when Pluto brought Proserpine to Hades.

[2] Even Basutos sacrifice and pray for the dead man at his grave in order to secure him a happy reception in the Other World. E. Casalis, *Les Bassoutos*, Paris, 1859, p. 264.

[3] J. A. Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, p. 6; Weber, *op. cit.* pp. 343, 347.

[4] *Apoc. of Moses*, xxxv., xxxvi. ff.; his soul is pardoned and given to Michael to be cleansed and to be placed in Paradise.

of Zephaniah says that when the angel blows his trumpet daily, the righteous dead, including Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, pray for all in torment—a belief found also in Christian Apocalypses.[1]

Examples of such ideas from early Christian literature will now be cited.[2] In the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (*c.* 160 A.D.), Tryphæna received Thecla, after her dead daughter Falconilla had appeared to her and begged her to take Thecla in her place, 'in order that she may pray concerning me, and that I may be transferred to the place of the just.'[3] The African martyr, S. Perpetua (*c.* 203), prayed for her dead brother whom she saw in a vision in a gloomy region vainly trying to reach water in a font above his head. There followed another vision in which she saw that he could now reach the water. Then he ran away to play, as children do, and she knew that he had been released from the place of torment.[4] In the *Testament of Abraham* the patriarch sees the weighing of souls, and, with the archangel Michael, prays for a soul whose sins weigh the same as his good deeds, and who must wait outside Paradise till the Judgment Day. The soul is now at once admitted as a result of their prayers.[5] S. Paul is described in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (*c.* 390) as weeping for tortured sinners, while S. Michael and hosts of angels weep with him. They implore the Lord to

[1] See this Apocalypse in *TU*, Leipzig, 1899, ii. 3, and cf. my *Early Christian Visions*, Edinburgh, 1912, p. 46. In the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, vii. 4, 5, the fallen angels ask Enoch to pray for them, but he says that a mortal cannot pray for angels. In the *Book of Enoch* they beg him to present their petition for forgiveness to God; he does this, but it is refused (c. xiii.). The Slavonic version of the *Apocalypse of Baruch* tells how Baruch heard sinners calling to Heaven, 'O just Judge, have pity on us.' He says to the angel, 'Bid me weep with them, so that the Lord may hear my voice and pity them.' The version says nothing further of this (*TS* v. i. 101).

[2] For prayers for the dead in Christian public worship, see A. J. MacLean, *ERE* x. 210.

[3] *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, c. 28.

[4] *Passio Perpetuæ*, c. 7, in *TS* i. part ii.

[5] *Test. of Abraham*, c. 14.

have mercy on the sinful souls, and in their prayer they are joined by the elders and all those in Heaven. Then the voice of Christ is heard announcing that they will have remission of torments for a day and a night for ever 'on the day that I rose from the dead,' *i.e.* on Easter, or, in the later Latin version, on Sundays.[1] The same idea occurs in the hymn-writer Prudentius (fourth century), who says in his *Cathæmerinon* that the sufferings of the tormented souls *sub Styge* are remitted on Easter Eve, the time when Christ returned on high from Acheron.[2]

In the later *Apocalypse of Mary* (ninth century), the Virgin, joined by patriarchs, prophets, and saints, prays for sinners whom she has seen in Hell. Then the Father sends the Son to tell these sinners that they will have rest on the days of Pentecost.[3] Intercession for the lost is also found in the Syriac and Arabic versions of the Assumption of the Virgin: in the latter the Virgin asks our Lord to pity the sinners and treat them mildly, and He promises to do this.[4] These ideas have already been found in Judaism, and may have had their source there. They were popular in the Middle Ages.

The *Apocalypse of Thomas*, in the Anglo-Saxon version, describes how the Virgin, S. Michael, and S. Peter pray successively for sinners, and at the prayer of each a third part of them is forgiven.[5]

[1] *Apoc. of Paul*, c. 43 f.

[2] Prudentius, *Cathæm.* v. 125, in *PL* lix. 827 f. A note of the editor says that, according to Goes, *Historia*, the Ethiopians think that souls in Purgatory on certain Sundays and on the preceding Saturday are freed from torment. It may be noted that a passage in Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Hom. in Sabbato Magno* (*PG* xliii. 440), speaks of Easter Eve as the day on which salvation is brought to those on earth and those under the earth—a reference to baptism at that time and to the Descent. But it suggests how the tradition of a yearly aid to souls on that day might arise.

[3] James, p. 563.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 225; M. Nicolas, *Études sur les évangiles apocryphes*, Paris, 1866, p. 244.

[5] James, p. 562. Cf. *Questions of S. Bartholomew*, p. 145, *infra*, where Christ, at the prayer of S. Michael, descends to Hades to bring up Adam.

A poem by Ancellus, director of the school at S. Benoit-sur-Loire in the early tenth century, which describes a vision of the Descent to Hades, tells how a monk saw the image of Christ come down from the Cross on Palm Sunday, and lead him to Hell. The demons are afraid : the chiefs of Hell with their retinue flee : the imprisoned souls are set free by Christ, who bids His angels take them to bliss. A demon is bidden to escort the monk back, and he tells him that this release occurs every Easter, because so many prelates, priests, nuns, and others pray for souls and give alms on their behalf. The worst sinners, however, are left behind.[1] This poem goes further than the traditional idea of cessation from torment, but the same belief is found in the *Chronicle* of the monk Rudolphus Glaber (eleventh century), who relates that a demon informed a monk about a marvellous secret. Every year on Easter Eve Christ depeopled Tartarus of all souls and took them to the upper regions. Hence, he said, the monk might safely gratify his passions. Glaber regards the demon's statement as a lie.[2]

According to the legend of S. Brandan's Voyage, Judas was seen naked on a rock buffeted by the waves. He told the saint that he was permitted to leave the fires of Hell and come to this rock every Sunday from vespers to vespers, and from Christmas to Epiphany, from Easter to Whitsunday, and on every feast-day of our Lord. He besought Brandan to intercede with Christ that He would permit him to remain on the rock until morning. Demons arrived at night to take him back to Hell, but the saint kept them off till the next morning. To his questions Judas answered that a cloth hanging over his head, which beat upon his body, was one given by him to a leper, but bought with money stolen from our Lord, therefore it

[1] E. du Méril, *Poesies pop. lat. anter. au douziéme siècle*, Paris, 1843, p. 206.
[2] R. Glaber, *Chron.* v. 1.

caused him great pain. But two ox-tongues hanging above him had been bought with his own money and given to two priests that they might pray for him, and now they eased him because the fish nibbled them and spared his flesh. The stone on which he sat was one which he had removed from a place where it was an obstacle to passers-by, and now he could rest on it, for every good deed shall be rewarded.[1] Honorius of Autun asserted that angels or saints sometimes appear in Hell and bring fresh air, pleasing perfumes, and the like to those who have once done them honour.[2]

There were also legends of a weekly cessation of Hell-torments, as in the Latin versions of the *Visio Pauli*, and, according to one of these, souls escaped from the mouth of Hell in the form of black birds on Saturday at sunset, returning on Monday morning. The influence of Muhammadan belief here is alleged by Asin, who shows that ' the torture of believers and infidels ceased for the day and night on Friday, during which time the soul is allowed to visit its tomb and there receive the prayers offered up on its behalf.' Souls of the wicked are incarnate in birds of black plumage in Muhammadan tradition, and are seen rising from the sea black, but returning at night white, only to have the black colour restored. The change from remission once a year in the earlier versions of the *Apocalypse of Paul* to once a week in the medieval versions is due to Moslem influence, according to Asin.[3]

The medieval theological doctrine was that the torments of Hell, unlike those of Purgatory, could not be escaped from.

[1] Jac. de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, vii. 61 f. (London, Temple Classics series). In other versions the times of release vary along with other details. See Migne, *Dict. des légendes*, Paris, 1855, col. 724. Cf. also M. Arnold's ' Saint Brandan.'

[2] Honorius of Autun, in *PL* clxxii. 1158.

[3] Migne, ' Visio Pauli,' in *Dict. des légendes*, cols. 1034, 1040; M. Asin, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, London, 1926, p. 223 f.

The popular belief in their occasional cessation may be traced back to the time of S. Augustine, who says that some believed in the cessation or respite of eternal pains, a belief which he is not inclined to accept, but 'they may think, if they like, that these pains, at certain intervals, are somewhat mitigated.' Nevertheless the wrath of God abides with such sinners, and their condemnation is eternal. Others, not eternally lost, *i.e.* Christians who still need purgation after death, suffer purgatorial pains and benefit by the prayers of the Church.[1] The tradition of the occasional alleviation of Hell-pains must have remained, and a certain *levamen* of these is admitted even by the great Schoolmen.[2] It may have been strengthened by the more poetic or rhetorical descriptions of our Lord's Descent to Hades, which speak of the cessation of torments then and describe these in detail.[3] It was easy to imagine that such alleviations occurred at other times also. But any belief in escape from Hell was contrary to theological dogma. Cæsarius of Heisterbach, citing a story in which Everwach, after entering into a pact with the devil, dies impenitent and is taken to Hell —a version of the earlier Theophilus story—but is permitted to return to life if he will join the Crusaders, adds: 'If any one objects—In Hell there is no redemption, we may say that this is true of those who are not allowed to return to the bodily life and who cannot share in the benefits of salvation.'[4] The apparent exception proved the rule.

But to return to earlier Christian practice. By 200 A.D. Tertullian speaks of the custom of making oblations for the dead on their anniversary, claiming tradition for this. It was much favoured by the Montanists, and Tertullian tells of a widow who prayed for her dead husband, that he might have

[1] Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 110, 112; *de Civ. Dei*, xxi. 13, 16, 24.
[2] See passages quoted in Plumptre, p. 293.
[3] See Ussher, iii. 300.
[4] Cæs. Heist. *Dial. miraculorum*, xii. 23.

refrigerium and a part in the first resurrection.[1] An interesting passage in the Acts of the martyr Callistratus shows the prevalence of the custom. 'If any one who is a Christian offers up prayers or consecrates an oblation and alms, so gaining the intercession of the saints, they can thus consign to the great place of rest him who looked forward to torments. For God is propitiated and remits the sins of them who have fallen asleep by means of the offering of Christ.'[2] The custom is also illustrated from the writings of S. Cyprian, as one popular in his time, though he forbids it under certain conditions.[3] In the second book of the *Sibylline Oracles* (third or early fourth century) there is a prediction that sinners punished in Gehenna will have hope of salvation through the prayers of the righteous. To this a later scribe appends an absolute denial, 'for the fire will never cease to torment the damned.'[4]

A sentence in the *Apocalypse of Peter* seems to hint at salvation for sinners because of believers. S. Peter has appealed to Christ to have pity on eternally doomed sinners. He weeps many hours, and then Christ says: 'It is because of them that have believed in Me, that, at their word, I shall have pity.'[5] So, in the *Epistle of the Apostles*, Christ says that He will hearken to the prayer of the righteous which they make for sinners.[6]

While popular opinion thought of the possibility of the transference of the lost to a better place, theological opinion was more guarded, though Origen and other Eastern theologians

[1] Tertullian, *de Corona*, 3, 4; *de Monogam.* 10.

[2] F. C. Conybeare, *The Apology and Acts of Apollonius and other Monuments of Early Christianity*, London, 1894, pp. 311 ff.

[3] Cyprian, *Epp.* i., xii., xxxix.

[4] *Sib. Orac.* iii. 255 f.; see James, *op. cit.* p. 324.

[5] James, p. 520.

[6] *Ep. of Apost.* c. 40. The salvation of sinners in torment at the prayer of the righteous is also suggested in the Coptic *Apocalypse of Elias*, James, p. 521.

maintained the temporal nature of future punishments. But generally in the East, and more emphatically in the West, their eternal aspect was insisted on. The Liturgies prayed for all the dead, but prayer could not avail for those who died in wilful sin, and we have seen how S. Augustine treated the problem. Prayers and the oblation of the Eucharist could benefit only those on whom purgatorial pains were inflicted, but not those who merited eternal loss. The doctrine of Purgatory, as it came to be defined and as it is found in the writings of Pope Gregory (540–604 A.D.), taught that some of the faithful must still suffer beyond the grave. But this purgatorial fire was only for very light and venial sins.[1] Gregory illustrated this teaching by a number of curious visions, while by these and other stories he sought to show the great value of the Holy Sacrifice in releasing a soul from the pains of Purgatory. When the Eucharist was duly offered, the soul passed to a better state.[2] The preeminence of Gregory as a theologian and an ecclesiastic gave great support to the doctrines of Purgatory and of the power of the Holy Sacrifice—doctrines which, as has been seen, had already been tentatively approached. Of S. Gregory, though he himself had limited to purgatorial punishments all such deliverance by prayer, it was later told that by his prayers the soul of the Emperor Trajan had been delivered from Hell, as the soul of the Muhammadan father of S. John Damascene had also been transferred by his son's prayers. This story, which Dante twice refers to, and the popularity of which is seen by its insertion in *The Golden Legend*, puzzled theologians, if it was acceptable to the popular fancy.[3] Aquinas gives two opinions : one that Trajan's punishment was only suspended to the Day of Judgment, the other that Trajan and men like him had not

[1] Greg. *Dialogues*, iv. 30.
[2] See the *Dialogues*, *passim*, and my *Early Christian Visions*, p. 69 f.
[3] *Golden Legend*, iii. 68 ; Dante, *Purg.* x. 73 f., *Par.* xx. 44 f., 106.

been finally sent to Hell.[1] 'The soul may well be in Hell,' says *The Golden Legend*, 'and feel there no pain by the mercy of God,' but adds that Gregory was punished for his prayer by continual sickness in this life, which he chose rather than two days in Purgatory. Dante's solution is that while none returns to good will in Hell, yet Trajan's soul was permitted to return for a short space to the body, and believed and was saved, as in Cæsarius' story just cited.

There is every likelihood that, apart from the natural growth of the belief in the rescue of souls from punishment in the unseen, whether Purgatory or Hell, out of the heart's instinctive hopes, this belief was aided by the current doctrine of the Harrowing of Hell, especially as that was popularly conceived. Christ had made death and the Underworld powerless. He had rescued souls thence and transferred them to Paradise; He had planted His Cross in Hades. What He had done once He might be willing to do again in effect at the prayers of the righteous or at the offering of the Holy Sacrifice for the souls of the dead. If medieval theology limited such cessation of pain or release to the state of Purgatory, the growing belief in the powers of the Virgin Mary as intercessor and helper modified that view in popular religion. Legend after legend told how she had interposed to rescue a sinner about to be carried off into Hell, because he called on her or had worshipped her, even only nominally, in life. A demon complains in one story: 'From morning to evening she is occupied in seeking means of frustrating us. If she were permitted, she would not leave one soul in Hell.'[2] Still more was she held to have power over the cessation of purgatorial pain. On one occasion, says a *fabliau*, the souls in Purgatory heard the rejoicing in

[1] Aquinas, *Summa*, suppl. quæst. 73. 5.

[2] P. J. B. Legrand d'Aussy, *Fabliaux ou contes du xii et du xiii siècle*, Paris, 1781, v. 60.

Paradise when God held a *cours-pleniére*, and begged that their pains might cease. Their prayers would not have been heard had not the Virgin joined with hers, asking her Son that they might have respite on that day and the next. Our Lord replied that her wish was granted, but for three instead of two days. For this reason on All Souls' Day the fires of Purgatory are extinct, but not those of Hell.[1] We have already seen that there were occasions when the punishments even of Hell were allayed.

Note to Chapter IV

The prohibition about not eating the food of Hades has been found in several tales and myths cited. It occurs also in stories of visits to fairy-land, as well as in many other myths and eschatological beliefs.

In Chinook belief the spirit drank at a hole in the ground in Hades, and then partook of the food of ghosts. Having once done this it could never return to this world, but was bound to the dead.[2] The Egyptian dead who ate and drank the food and water offered them by a goddess could not return without special permission.[3] Pluto secretly made Persephone eat seven seeds of a pomegranate, and she was then bound to him in Hades.[4] On the Orphic tablets buried with the dead they are bidden to avoid a certain well in Hades: 'On the left you will find a stream, and near by a white poplar. Approach it not'—perhaps a reminiscence of this prohibition.[5] Those who visited Yama's Kingdom as his guests were told not to eat his food, and in a Teutonic tale recorded by Saxo Grammaticus the visitors to a mysterious region not open to mortals abstain from its food and drink lest their memory should be lost and they should never be able to return.[6] The classic

[1] d'Aussy, *Fabliaux ou contes du xii et du xiii siècle*, v. 87.
[2] L. Spence, in Hastings' *ERE* iii. 562.
[3] G. Maspero, *Études de myth. Egypt.*, Paris, 1893, ii. 226.
[4] *Homeric Hymn*, v. 399.
[5] Dieterich, *Nekyia*, p. 86.
[6] W. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, London, 1858–72, v. 320; Saxo Grammaticus, *Danish History*, London, 1894, p. 344 f.

example of the prohibition as it applies to fairy-land is found in the medieval poem of *Thomas of Ersyldoune*:

> ' He pressed to pulle fruyt with his hand
> As man for faute that was faynt;
> She sayd, Thomas lat it stand,
> Or els the devil will the ataynt.'

And in scores of tales the visitor to fairy-land is warned not to eat the food offered to him, and when he does eat it, he is bound to that land. Scott, in ' Wandering Willie's Tale,' introduces this belief, current in Scottish folk-lore, with great effect, and speaks of the visitor to Hell refusing ' the devil's arles, for such was the offer of meat and drink.' [1]

The supposed result of breaking the prohibition—detention in Hades, etc.—is derived from primitive and savage notions regarding food. To eat the food of a strange tribe establishes kinship with its members, and is one of the methods of sealing a covenant. Hence to eat the food of gods, ghosts, or fairies makes the eater one with them, and he must remain among them. He is sealed of their tribe. This is illustrated from the Babylonian myth of Adapa. He would have been admitted into the circle of the gods after discovering their secrets, had he not refused the food of life and water of life offered to him, believing that these were the food and water of death.[2] Similarly, in the ' Navajo Mountain Chant,' the hero is forbidden to eat animals' food lest he become an animal, and in Australian native belief if a child touches a certain fungus growing on trees this makes him liable to be spirited away by ghosts.[3]

A covenant is also sealed, or one is made member of another tribe, by touching, striking hands, or bodily contact of some kind. This doubtless explains the prohibition in the Yoruba tale, not to touch the dead lest the way to the upper world be closed for ever. The same prohibition is found in an Iroquois story of a hunter whose dead wife returned to him by permission of the Great Spirit,

[1] Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chapter xii. For other examples see E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. 47 f.; E. S. Hartland, *The Science of Fairy Tales*, London, 1891, p. 47 f.

[2] Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 550.

[3] W. Matthews, *Fifth Report*, Smithsonian Bureau of Ethnology; K. L. Parker, *More Australian Legendary Tales*, London, 1898, p. xi.

but who was for ever lost to him, because he broke the command not to touch her.[1]

The prohibition imposed on Orpheus, not to look back, is frequently found both in ritual and magic, especially in Underworld rites, and may be explained by the idea that man may not gaze with impunity on what pertains to a supernatural plane, lest it harm him or force him to join the Underworld ghosts, or lest he destroy the spell by looking on things better unobserved by mortals.

In many folk-tales from all parts of the world, a visit is paid by a mortal (1) to a subterranean region—fairy-land or the abode of strange beings—in order to rescue a stolen person, to capture a treasure, or merely out of curiosity; or (2) to a land below the earth or sea ruled by a mysterious personage.[2] Folk-tales also recount visits made to the Christian Hell, where the visitor usually outwits the devil and returns with souls which he has rescued.[3]

[1] *Fourth Report*, Smithsonian Bureau of Ethnol. p. 103. In Lincolnshire folk-lore, on the other hand, if one sees a dead body, but does not touch it, he is likely to be haunted by the ghost (*Lincolnshire County Folk-Lore*, London, 1908, p. 51).

[2] See my articles, 'Fairy,' 'Underworld,' in Hastings' *ERE* v. 678 ff., xii. 516 f.; and *The Childhood of Fiction*, London, 1905, p. 44; T. Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, London, 1844, pp. 85 ff.; A. Werner, *op. cit.* chapter v.

[3] G. Dottin, *Contes et légendes d'Irlande*, Paris, 1901, pp. 29, 164; W. Larminie, *West Irish Folk-Tales*, London, 1893, p. 188; A. Le Braz, *La Légende de la mort*[2], Paris, 1902, ii. 337 f.

CHAPTER V

THE DESCENT TO HADES IN THE APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

Some of the ethnic myths just discussed will be referred to in succeeding chapters. We now pass to a consideration of our Lord's Descent to Hades, the subject of this book. From at least the second century there was no more well-known and popular belief, including the Descent to Hades, the overcoming of Death and Hades, the Preaching to the Dead, and the Release of Souls, and its popularity steadily increased. After a detailed investigation, we shall see that, as expressed then and later, the belief owes little or nothing to Pagan myths, though the form in which it is expressed is mythical, *i.e.* in accordance with current conceptions of the Other World.

Leaving the question of the ultimate origin of the doctrine until the subject has been fully considered from other points of view, our first task is to consider whether the belief is found in the apostolic writings of the New Testament—Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse.

As is now generally admitted, several passages point to the existence of the belief in apostolic days, though others are still the subject of dispute. The current conceptions of the Other World in which the apostles were nurtured must have made them postulate, at least, Christ's presence in Hades, even if there had been no other source for their opinion.

To take S. Paul first, the Descent is implied in Eph. iv. 9 : 'Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended

first into the lower parts of the earth ? ' (*εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς*).

While some take ' the lower parts of the earth ' as implying simply this earth to which the pre-existent Christ descended from Heaven, and connect it with the Incarnation, the nature of the formula seems to imply more than this, namely, beneath the earth, Hades, the abyss of Rom. x. 7. The ' lower parts of the earth ' signified Hades in current beliefs (cf. Ps. lxiii. [lxii.] 9, Sept., *τὰ κατώτατα τῆς γῆς*). Christ descended there, and then ascended ' far above all heavens ' (the opposite of the ' lower parts of the earth '), ' that He might fill all things.' No part of the universe—Hades, Earth, Heaven—was to be unvisited by Him. This is implied in Phil. ii. 10 : Christ's obedience even to death is the cause of His exaltation and of His universal sovereignty not only over the heavenly and the earthly, but over *τὰ καταχθόνια*, the usual classical expression for those in Hades. It may also be implied in Rom. xiv. 9 : ' For to this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

The key to the passage in Eph. iv. 9 is the word ' ascended ' in ver. 8 : this produces a characteristic digression on the contrasted words ' ascended,' ' descended,' and it is not impossible that here there is a reference to a Christological formula, giving facts in brief form, a trace of which we find in Rom. x. 6 (cf. Phil. ii. 9 ; S. John iii. 13 ; where, however, Christ speaks only of Descent to earth), and in 1 S. Pet. iii. 18 f.[1]

The Descent is also suggested in Rom. x. 7 (adapted from Deut. xxx. 13 : *Τίς διαπεράσει ἡμῖν εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης ;*) : [2] ' Who shall descend into the abyss (*καταβήσεται εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον*), that is, to bring up Christ from the dead ? ' The

[1] Cf. Clemen, p. 169.

[2] ' The ambiguous *ἄβυσσον* covers both *θάλασσαν* and *ᾅδην* (cf. Ps. cvi. [cvii.] 26, Luke viii. 31) ' (Swete, p. 60).

passage implies that Christ had been in the abyss—the Underworld, the place of the dead (cf. 'from the dead') (cf. Ps. lxxi. [lxx.] 20, Sept., ἐκ τῶν ἀβύσσων τῆς γῆς), as He is now in Heaven (v. 6).

In Col. ii. 15 the conquest of principalities and powers—'making a show of them openly'—is directly connected with the Cross—'triumphing over them in it.' But in Phil. ii. 10 we hear of 'things under the earth' (τὰ καταχθόνια),[1] as well as earthly and Heavenly, bending the knee, *i.e.* making their prayer, in the name of Jesus—a possible reference to the conquest and submission of Hades (personified in 1 Cor. xv. 55), or to the knowledge of Himself imparted to the dead.

The Release of Souls may be referred to in S. Paul's citation of the verse of Ps. lxviii. 18 in Eph. iv. 8 when referring to the Descent followed by the Ascent of Christ: 'When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive' ('captivity' here means 'the captives'). In the Psalm the captives are enemies taken at the capture of Zion by God, who is regarded as leading His people. If this sense were kept, the captives would mean Satan and his hosts conquered through the Cross. But in what sense were they led captive by Christ when He ascended? Are the captives not those held in bondage in the lower parts of the earth, whom He released and led on high? The captives would thus be equivalent to the 'spirits in prison' of 1 S. Pet. iii. 19. Assuming this to be the force of the words as S. Paul cites them—an interpretation followed by many of the Fathers,[2] he would thus contemplate a transference of souls from Hades to Paradise. Christ ascends as a conqueror, bringing the spoils of Hades. This interpretation, however, is

[1] Cf. Rev. v. 3: 'No one in Heaven, or on earth, or under the earth (ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς) was able to open the book.' Τὰ καταχθόνια are not demons, for these dwell in the air (Eph. ii. 2, vi. 12).

[2] See Origen, *Comm. in Rom.* v. 1, vi. 10.

problematical, and must not be pressed.[1] S. Paul may be merely quoting the whole verse of the Psalm because of its reference to an Ascension and to gifts, without thinking of the force of the words 'led captivity captive.'

The earlier Fathers interpreted the clause in different ways, and did not see in it a reference to a release of captives from Hades. Justin explains it as a prophecy of Christ's delivering us or carrying us captive from error after His Ascension and giving us gifts.[2] Irenæus explains it as 'bringing to naught the power of the disobedient angels.'[3] Elsewhere, apparent references of his to the phrase point to God's or Christ's making the devil captive who had led men captive.[4]

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems also to know the Descent. God 'brought up again from the dead the Lord Jesus' (xiii. 20). Possibly he contemplated also the release of souls, as Loofs suggests. The Old Testament saints 'without us should not be made perfect' (xi. 40). But, on the other hand, 'even now the heavenly Jerusalem contains not only the *ἐκκλησία πρωτοτόκων* (apostles and other believers of the first generation), but also the *πνεύματα δικαίων τετελειωμένων* (xii. 22 f.). Now these *δίκαιοι τετελειωμένοι* must also include the heroes of faith mentioned in chapter xi. Until Christ came, however, the way into the holiest of all was not open to them (cf. ix. 8). Christ alone, who *τελειωθεὶς ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου* (v. 9),

[1] The early Christian hymn cited in Eph. v. 14, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,' may represent Christ's triumph-song on entering Hades: so J. A. Robinson and M. R. James, *The Gospel according to Peter and the Revelation of Peter*, London, 1892, p. 28.

[2] Justin, *Dial.* 39. [3] Iren. *Epid.* c. 83.

[4] Iren. *Hær.* iii. 23. 1, cf. v. 21. 3. In ii. 20. 3 the passage is quoted without comment. In iii. 21. 6, Eph. iv. 10 is cited without the verse of the Psalm (cf. v. 31. 1). In iii. 19. 3 Christ is said to have descended into the lower parts of the earth seeking the lost sheep (Adam or mankind, cf. iii. 23. 1); then He ascends and offers and commends to the Father the man that had been found

can have opened to them the holy place ; through His death our *πρόδρομος* (vi. 20) entered the holy place, *εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν* (ix. 24) ; *ἐνεκαίνισεν ἡμῖν ὁδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν, διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος, τοῦτ' ἔστι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ* (x. 20). In all these passages, no doubt, the writer is thinking primarily of Christ's *sacrificial* death, but do his words not gain in clearness when we assume that he had also the *Descensus* in his mind ? ' [1] This line of argument would point to a belief of the writer of the Epistle that the righteous of the Old Covenant had been taken to a better state or made perfect.

The writer of the Revelation knows the Descent, since he puts into the mouth of Christ the words : ' I am He that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of Hades and of Death ' (i. 18). As His Resurrection proves, Christ, though He died and was one of the dead in Hades, could not be held by Death or Hades : thus He is superior to them, and thus, possessing their keys, can open the doors of the Underworld to the faithful souls there. In Rabbinic belief the power over these keys belonged to God alone.[2] According to 3 Bar. xi. 2, the archangel Michael holds the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and none can enter until he opens. There is no necessity to suppose, as Bousset does, a popular myth by which, as a result of a combat with Death and the powers of Hades, their keys are wrenched from them.[3] Nor is the breaking of the gates of Hades, referred to in later notices of the Descent, implied here, for then the keys would be unnecessary. Christ possesses the keys of the Underworld and can open its gates, just as the angel is given the key of the pit of the abyss, in order to open it (Rev. ix. 1, xx. 1).[4]

[1] Loofs, ' Descent to Hades (Christ's),' *ERE* iv. 662.

[2] R. H. Charles, *Inter. Crit. Comm., The Revelation of St. John*, i. 33.

[3] W. Bousset, *Kurios Christos*[2], p. 37.

[4] In 2 Enoch xlii. 1, the keys of the gates of hell are in the hands of monstrous guardians.

The first Epistle of S. Peter contains two passages which we take to refer to the Descent and the Preaching in Hades (iii. 18 f., iv. 6). These passages, especially the first, are regarded by some as wholly enigmatic. But were they so to those by whom they were first read? The enigma disappears if the passages are taken in their plain sense.

(1) 'Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah' (iii. 18 f., R.V.).[1]

(2) Following on a passage about the nearness of judgment on living and dead, the apostle adds: 'For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit' (iv. 6, R.V.).

Apart from theories of interpolation, many interpretations of these passages, often more ingenious than true, have been given from early times. Generally speaking, they have been arrived at because the plain meaning of the passages conflicted with the interpreters' views of the nature of life beyond the grave, or of the impossibility of enlightenment or pardon there. Some of these interpretations may be passed under review.

(1) S. Augustine thought that the Petrine passages had no reference to Hades, and in this he was followed by later commentators, *e.g.* Aquinas and Pearson. He supposed that the words, 'in which . . . He preached . . . in the days of Noah,' meant that the pre-existent Christ came in the Spirit, as He often did to comfort or rebuke, speaking by suitable manifestations of Himself. In the Spirit He came and preached to the disobedient before the Flood. The spirits are said to

[1] For the variant texts see Gschwind, pp. 41 ff.

be 'in prison' because they were in the darkness of ignorance while yet in the bodies of men. Christ's Spirit was 'quickened' because, by the operation of the Spirit, in which He was wont to come and preach in bygone days, His flesh was quickened and rose again from the dead.[1]

This interpretation rests on the meaning of 'quickened in spirit' in the previous clause. If it meant 'quickened by the Holy Spirit,' the article and a preposition would be present. None of the best texts read *τῷ*, and this translation is thus not permissible. This appears from the opposition of the two clauses—*θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκί* and *ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι*. Nothing can be more obvious than that a statement is made regarding Christ's Body and Spirit. The Body was dead: the Spirit was still quick or living.[2] In that disembodied Spirit still alive Christ went (*πορευθείς*, cf. ver. 22, *πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανόν*—a local progression, cf. Eph. iv. 9, 10, 'descended,' 'ascended'), and preached to the spirits in prison. His Spirit went to these spirits, or, in the words of Hippolytus, He entered Hades, 'as Soul among souls.'[3]

It is significant that the Syriac version reads 'Scheiûl' (Sheol or Hades) for 'prison,' and this interpretation is given by some of the Fathers. The word *φυλακή*, a prison or place of security, is used of the lowest part of the Underworld; the prison of Satan, in Rev. xx. 7.[4] Here it is equivalent to Hades or Sheol, the place where souls are guarded, as in 2 Bar. xxiii. 4: 'a place prepared where . . . the dead might be guarded'; or 2 Esd. vii. 85, 95: the 'dwelling-places' or 'chambers' of

[1] Aug. *Ep.* clxiv. 15 f.; Aquinas, *Summa*, iii. 52. 2.

[2] Cf. 1 Tim. iii. 16, *ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι*, and S. Luke xxiii. 46, 'Into Thy hands I commend My spirit (*πνεῦμά μου*).'

[3] See p. 96, *infra*.

[4] Cf. 2 S. Pet. ii. 4 and S. Jude 6 for the shutting up of the fallen angels in Tartarus, and 2 Enoch xl. 12—the prisoners in the lowest hell expecting the Judgment.

righteous souls, guarded by angels.[1] Hence such Old Testament passages as Isa. xlii. 7, xlix. 9, lxi. 1, which spoke of a release of captives or the opening of prison (referring to the end of the Exile), were explained by the Fathers as prophecies of the release of souls from the prison of Hades. Though πνεύματα is used of angelic beings in Jewish literature and in Acts xxiii. 8, 9, here it means spirits of the dead, as in Heb. xii. 23, 'spirits of just men made perfect.' The same meaning is found in *Enoch* xx. 3 ff.: there are hollow places created in Sheol that 'the spirits of the souls of the dead should assemble therein,' and 'I saw the spirits of the children of men who were dead'; and in ciii. 36: 'the spirits of those who have died in righteousness.'

(2) Akin to this interpretation is that which takes the 'spirits in prison' to be spirits of Jews and Gentiles still living on earth, to whom the apostles, inspired by the Spirit, preach in vain. They are disobedient, like those of Noah's day.[2] What has been said of the previous interpretation applies equally to this, which is even more strained.

(3) Another interpretation makes the preaching that of the pre-existent Christ to the fallen angels of whom Jewish tradition, resting on Gen. vi. 2, spoke so much, and who were shut up in ward against the Day of Judgment (2 S. Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6; *Book of Enoch*).[3] This is rather fanciful. Enoch is said to have been sent to proclaim God's destroying judgment to these angels (chapter xii.). Jewish tradition, therefore, regarded their lot as hopeless. Hence it is not obvious why, if Christ preached to them their condemnation, the word used should be that which is often used for preaching salvation

[1] Cf. 1 Enoch c. 5; 2 Enoch xlii. 1.

[2] Cf. Luther, *Works*, li. 458 f.

[3] F. Spitta, *Christi Predigt an die Geister*, Göttingen, 1890. Cf. H. Holtzmann's remarks in his 'Hollenfahrt in N.T.,' *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, xi. [1908] 291.

(ἐκήρυξεν). The preaching is rather to disembodied spirits of men (cf. iv. 6 νεκροῖς, and Heb. xii. 23 πνεύμασι δικαίων) by the disembodied Spirit of Christ (πνεύμασι, πνεύματι). This is made practically certain by the reference to the salvation of few, that is eight souls, at the Flood. These are mentioned in contrast to the disobedient who were not saved from it.[1]

Dr. Rendel Harris maintains that the passage was a reference to Enoch's preaching, but that his name, through similarity to ἐν ᾧ καί, has dropped out as the subject to ἐκήρυξεν.[2] But though Enoch's condemnatory message to the imprisoned angels is referred to in the *Book of Enoch* (xii. 4 f.), there is no Jewish tradition of his preaching to spirits in prison, nor is it clear why such a tradition, granting its existence, should be suddenly inserted in the passage.

(4) Modern Roman Catholics, since the established doctrine of the Preaching in Hades confines it to the Limbus Patrum, the forecourt of Hell, treat this passage as meaning that the *effect* of Christ's preaching extended to the lost, without His having actually descended to them.[3] This certainly strains the plain meaning of ' went and preached.'

(5) The interpretation which makes ἐκήρυξεν mean an announcement of condemnation is negatived by the fact that κηρύσσειν never has this meaning in the New Testament. It almost invariably refers to a preaching of the Kingdom of God,

[1] Another form of this interpretation is that of F. C. Baur, *Vorlesungen über die NT Theol.*, Leipzig, 1864, p. 291, and M. Lauterburg, in Herzog-Hauck, *Real-Ency.*[3] viii. 201, that Christ preached to the fallen angels *after* His ascension. Here 1 Tim. iii. 16 is adduced as a parallel, ὤφθη ἀγγέλοις.

[2] *Expositor*, vi. 194 ff., 346 ff. Dr. Harris reconstructs the text thus—ενωκαιενωχτοισενφυλακη. Cf. Clemen. *Expos.* vi. 316 f. for a reply to this. Cheyne, *Bible Problems*, p. 109, suggests that Enoch represents the pre-existent Christ.

[3] T. H. Simar, *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik*[4], Freiburg, 1899, i. 539 f.; Hundhausen, *Die erste Pontificalschreiben des Apostelfürsten Petrus*, Mainz, 1873, *in loc.*

of the Gospel of the Kingdom, of the Gospel, of repentance, of Christ, of the Word. Even if the preaching of the Kingdom of God implies the eschatological thought of Judgment, this is only part of the message: the stress is more on good news. In the only passage where *κηρύσσειν* is connected with an announcement of a future Judgment by Christ, it is separated from this by the use of 'testify' for the latter—'to preach to the people and to testify that this is He which is ordained to judge the quick and the dead' (Acts x. 42).

(6) The most thorough and comprehensive discussion of the two Petrine passages which has yet appeared is that of Dr. Karl Gschwind, which occupies over a hundred and thirty pages of his recent work, *Die Niederfahrt Christi in die Unterwelt*. In this he not only criticizes previous interpretations, but offers an explanation of both passages which excludes any reference to a Descent to Hades, and, as far as iii. 18 f. is concerned, presents an entirely new and striking meaning. He submits each word to a rigid examination, in the light of its use in the classics, the Septuagint, Jewish apocalyptic writings, and the New Testament. Thus he considers that *κηρύσσειν* need not refer to a preaching of good tidings, though, as we have seen, this is its invariable context in the New Testament. The word *πορευθείς* in his opinion is not generally used for 'descent,' but rather *καταβαίνειν* and *κατέρχεσθαι*; and he compares S. Luke xvi. 30, Acts i. 10 f., S. John xiv. 2, 3, 12, 28, etc., where it is used to betoken 'ascent,' as in 1 S. Pet. iii. 22. As for *φυλακή*, he regards it as betokening a place of custody where a future Judgment is being awaited, though it is difficult to see how this shuts out the meaning of 'Hades.' If the *πνεύματι* are spirits of men who died in the Flood, or even disobedient angels, a message of hope for them is excluded by the Jewish, the New Testament, and the Patristic view of the hopelessness of their fate.

Having thus cleared the way, he proceeds to discuss the passage in the light of the general teaching of the Epistle. Its chief interest is the problem of suffering, that of Christ and of Christians. Suffering serves a purpose: for Christ it led to glory; for Christians it is a test of faith and serves for their future glory. It is a condition of acquiring salvation. It is better to suffer now for well-doing than to suffer (in the future) for evil-doing. So Christ suffered for well-doing in order to bring us to God. Evil-doers who have died are punished, but greater punishment awaits them after the Judgment. The words ἐν ᾧ (v. 19) refer not to πνεύματι, but rather mean 'whereby,' 'wherewith,' and refer to the whole preceding idea of Christ, who did good, and suffered even to death, but was glorified in His Resurrection and Ascension. This—the righteous suffering Christ thus glorified—is the subject of the announcement (ἐκήρυξεν), not necessarily a preaching by word, but an object-lesson. But to whom and where? To the disobedient angels and demons of the Flood-era, who are punished in the firmament or in one of the Heavens (as in the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* and elsewhere). As Christ ascends as Victor through the Heavens, there is before them a visible proof—a κήρυγμα—of the value of suffering for righteousness, of the fact that it is better to do good than to do evil. By Christ's Ascension evil powers are made subject to Him (1 Cor. xv. 24; Eph. i. 21; 1 S. Pet. iii. 22). These evil, angelic, and demoniac powers now recognize the glory of Christ who will be their future Judge, their eternal fate being assured.

Gschwind finds a parallel to this in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, where Christ's Descent through the Heavens is hidden from the angels, but the promise is that He will judge and bring to naught the prince and his angels and the gods of this world. On His Ascent the angels of the firmament and Satan recognize Him for the glorious Lord and are filled with sorrow. A possible

echo of the conception thus supposed to be taught by S. Peter is found in Irenæus, who speaks of God's long-suffering towards the angels who transgressed, as well as towards the disobedience of men (cf. v. 20), for both of whom, angels and ungodly men, eternal fire is prepared ; and also of Christ's receiving testimony not only from the Father and the Spirit, angels and men, but from apostate spirits and demons[1] (cf. v. 22 : 'angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him'). In his *Epideixis* (c. 83) Irenæus explains 'led captive captivity' (Eph. iv. 8 ; Ps. lxviii. 18 f.) as 'the bringing to naught the rule of the rebellious angels.' This is in connexion with the Ascension.

This brief summary scarcely does justice to Gschwind's argument, or to the many details with which he seeks to support it. A discussion of the whole argument is impossible here. Suffice it to say that, with the possible exception of Irenæus, this interpretation of the passage is unknown to earlier as to later exegesis. It introduces a topic which is much more a foreign body in the Epistle than a reference to the Descent to Hades would be. Gentile readers, who are certainly addressed in the Epistle, could not have known what the writer meant, whereas if, as is likely, Christ's presence in Hades was part of the apostolic kerygma, they would have recognized a reference to it here. And if the second Epistle is from the same hand, the rebellious angels are not there in one of the Heavens, but in Tartarus (ii. 4).

The interpretations of iv. 6 which avoid here a Preaching in Hades are mainly two.

(1) The *νεκροί* are those now dead, but to whom the Gospel had been preached while they were in life. These are either Christians who died before the expected Parousia, or all alike, those who had received, those who had rejected, the Gospel.

[1] *Hær.* i. 10. 1, 3, iv. 6. 7.

(2) The *νεκροί* are those 'dead in trespasses and sins,' *i.e.* those who are or were spiritually dead, or simply the Gentiles. This interpretation was favoured by S. Augustine. The Gospel had been preached to those who were spiritually dead, that when they believed they might be judged according to men in the flesh, *i.e.* by various afflictions and by the death of the body, but live according to God in the spirit. Clement of Alexandria interprets 'for this cause was the Gospel preached to the dead,' as 'to us, namely, who formerly lived as unbelievers.' 'Those who fell from faith while yet in the flesh are judged according to the preceding judgments that they may repent. Hence S. Peter adds: they live according to God in the spirit.'[1] Evidently some form of penance for sin leading to amendment is in Clement's mind, for he refers to 1 Cor. v. 5, 1 Tim. i. 20.

Somewhat analogous to this is Gschwind's interpretation of the passage. From Jewish apocalyptic literature and from New Testament usage he has no difficulty in showing that 'living,' 'life,' stand for the righteous, who are living in a spiritual sense, and for righteousness; 'dead,' 'death,' mean the wicked, the spiritually dead, and wickedness. The living, the righteous, desire salvation: the spiritually dead are shut out from the Kingdom. Hence those who were spiritually dead learned the Gospel when it was preached to them: they now live according to God, *i.e.* spiritually, though men judge them wrongly (cf. iv. 4, ii. 20, iii. 16, 17). The 'dead' (*νεκροί*) of ver. 6 are like the *νεκροί* of ver. 5, the spiritually dead: the 'living' (*ζῶντας*) of ver. 5 are the righteous, those who live according to God in the spirit.[2]

Though it is undeniable that the righteous are regarded as

[1] Clement, *Adumbrationes in Epist. canonicas, ad loc.*, in T. Zahn, *Forschungen zur Gesch. des NT Kanons*, Erlangen, 1884, iii. 82.

[2] Gschwind, pp. 24 ff.

living, the wicked as dead, righteousness as life, sin as death, there is no direct proof that the phrase 'the quick and the dead,' standing by itself, means 'righteous and sinners.' In the only two other passages where it occurs in the New Testament (Acts x. 42; 2 Tim. iv. 1), Gschwind himself admits that the phrase gives no positive proofs either for the literal or the metaphorical meaning. My own belief is that the literal is the obvious sense in all three passages. The actually dead (*νεκροί*) are mentioned in the Epistle (i. 3, i. 21). Why should *νεκροί* mean the spiritually dead in iv. 5, 6? The literal use of the two words *ζῶντες* and *νεκροί* is seen in S. Matt. xxii. 32, 'not the God of the dead but of the living'; in S. Luke xxiv. 5, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?'; and in Rom. xiv. 9, 'He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

Taking *νεκροί* in its literal sense in ver. 5, the word will have the same meaning in ver. 6, namely, the dead who, with the living, are soon to be judged. This rules out the second interpretation. As to the first, had it been the meaning here, one would have expected some such phrase as 'those who are now dead.' The plain suggestion is that the Gospel was preached to them when they were dead. 'The quick and the dead' have just been mentioned. To the living the Gospel is preached. It has been preached also or even to the dead (*καὶ νεκροῖς*). Both will now share in judgment, but both will have heard that which will save them from condemnation, if they have accepted it. All the dead are to be judged, therefore to all the dead the Gospel has been preached. Had the first interpretation been intended here, then those dead persons who had heard the Gospel in their lifetime would be few in number in comparison with all the dead, and the second *νεκροί* would be limited, whereas the *νεκροί* of ver. 5 would be unlimited. Some other word or some defining phrase must then have been used. Judg-

ment is about to take place. The Gospel is being preached to the living; for this cause it has been preached to the dead. This was only fair to them. Both have an opportunity of repentance, 'living to God in the spirit,' even if a preliminary judgment has taken place in the flesh on those who are dead, *i.e.* death regarded as a result of sin, or a judgment with reference to the earthly life, such a judgment as is common to all men or after the pattern of men (*κατὰ ἀνθρώπους*).[1] The result of the preaching (for it is the preaching which is here emphasized, just as in iii. 19 the Preacher is all-important) will be that they may live after the pattern of God (*κατὰ Θεόν*) in the spirit.[2] Here we have the conception of a preaching and a judgment which affects the living as such and the dead as such. Parallel conceptions are found elsewhere. S. Paul describes the Resurrection as it affects the living and the dead. The dead shall be raised incorruptible; we, the living, shall be changed (1 Cor. xv. 52). Or in another passage: 'The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive shall be caught up together with them' (1 Thess. iv. 16–17). In the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 40) the making perfect affects not merely the living but the dead as such—'that they (the dead) without us (the living) should not be made perfect.'

Thus the preaching here spoken of is a preaching in Hades, a general preaching, not to one generation, of which a particular instance—to the disobedient of Noah's time—has already been given in iii. 19.[3] Nothing was said there as to the purpose

[1] In the *Book of Enoch* the Flood is called 'the first judgment.' S. Paul, in 1 Cor. v. 5, speaks of some one delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh—probably a temporal judgment leading to the mortifying of some fleshly appetite, with its result, the saving of the spirit in the day of the Lord.

[2] *κατὰ Θεόν*, 'after the pattern of God,' cf. i. 15, 'as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy.'

[3] Even in iii. 19 the Preaching must have been to many, since S. Peter says (v. 20) that only eight souls had obeyed in Noah's time.

of the Preaching: that is now clearly stated here—that the dead, though judged, may live to God.

Reverting to the earlier passage, its meaning seems to be that Christ died, His Body was dead. But His Spirit still lived. To prove this, consider that as a Spirit He then took the way of all spirits (πορευθείς) to the Underworld. There He preached to the spirits, to those who had been disobedient in the day of Noah. Why these only are mentioned is not clear, when all the dead are spoken of in iv. 6. They may be typical of a larger number to whom the good news was brought, or they may be mentioned in order to introduce a reference to the Flood as typical of baptismal grace.[1]

Or the reference to the men of Noah's time may be due to the fact that our Lord had referred to them along with the men of Sodom, and thus the writer's thoughts are turned to them. The Flood was a judgment upon them, as our Lord's words (S. Matt. xxiv. 37 f., S. Luke xvii. 26 f.) and Hebrews xi. 7 show; and this, as well as the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, comes into view in 2 S. Pet. ii. 5, 6. The people of Noah's day were peculiarly disobedient, even while the long-suffering of God waited—that long-suffering which is so hopefully spoken of in 2 S. Pet. iii. 9, 15 and in Rom. ii. 4. As great sinners, the men of Noah's day were representative, and hence, if the Gospel was preached to the dead, they are emphasized as hearers of it. As Saviour of sinners, Christ here appears emphatically in that aspect, preaching to these representative sinners, and abrogating the judgment passed on them by the

[1] Plumptre, p. 114: 'He has in mind one representative class of all those spirits of the dead to whom his Lord's teaching had once and again led his thoughts.' Bp. Horsley, *Sermons*, i. 436, thought he noticed a desire on the part of the writers of Holy Scripture 'to convey distinct intimations that the antediluvian race is not uninterested in the redemption and the final retribution.' Our Lord gives prominence to the men of Noah's day in His eschatological teaching (S. Matt. xxiv. 37, 38; S. Luke xvii. 26, 27). S. Peter may have been specially impressed by this.

Flood, by His willingness to preach to them that salvation which is for the whole world. S. Peter may have had in mind the Rabbinic tradition, as expressed in *Sanhedrin* x. i. ('the generation of the Flood has no share in the future world, and will not rise at the Judgment'), and desired to oppose it.[1]

No other interpretation than that of the work of the discarnate Spirit of Christ in Hades seems natural and self-evident here. Indeed all other interpretations merely evade this evident meaning. It is also rendered more probable when we consider that the verses, with their explanatory or limiting phrases, seem to follow the outlines of some well-known doctrinal formula. First is mentioned the Crucifixion, then the Death, the Descent to Hades, the Resurrection, and the Ascension:

The Crucifixion . .	ver. 18, 'Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God';
The Death . . .	ver. 18, 'being put to death in the flesh';
The Descent to Hades.	vv. 18–21, 'but quickened in the spirit, in which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison . . . towards God';
The Resurrection .	ver. 21, 'through the resurrection of Jesus Christ';
The Ascension . .	ver. 22, 'who is on the right hand of God, having gone into Heaven.'

Looked at in this way, it can hardly be doubted that S. Peter is referring to the Descent. Christ as complete Man, Body and Spirit, had preached to men living on earth. Now, as Spirit, He preached to spirits in Hades.

Whether intentional or not, an interesting parallelism runs through both passages. Both are antithetic, and the antithesis in each passage preserves a certain identity of subject:

iii. 18:		iv. 6:	
θανατωθεὶς μέν	*ζωοποιηθεὶς δέ*	*κριθῶσι μέν*	*ζῶσι δέ*
		κατὰ ἀνθρώπους	*κατὰ Θεόν*
σαρκί	*πνεύματι*	*σαρκί*	*πνεύματι*

[1] Cf. Clemen, p. 135.

Christ is put to death in the flesh, but made alive in Spirit. The dead are judged after the manner of men in the flesh, but live after the manner of God in the spirit.

There is a further parallel :

iii. 19:	iv. 6:
τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασι	νεκροῖς
ἐκήρυξεν	εὐηγγελίσθη

In both passages there is a preaching of good news, (*a*) to spirits in prison, (*b*) to the dead ; nor can there be any reasonable doubt that ' spirits in prison ' and ' the dead ' mean those in the unseen world. We here come in sight of that idea of a theodicy which is found in some of the Fathers, *e.g.* Clement of Alexandria. As our Lord said : ' this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world ' (S. Matt. xxiv. 14 ; cf. Col. i. 23, ' preached in all creation under heaven '). The thought was at once bound to arise, What of those who had passed away before our Lord came to this world, especially those who had ' desired to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them ' (S. Matt. xiii. 17) ? Were they to have no part in ' the common salvation ' ? The answer to this problem lay in this doctrine of a Preaching in Hades, to the dead on whom a judgment or punishment had already come—' judged according to men in the flesh ' — the punishment of death for sin.[1]

Though S. Peter refers to the purpose of the Preaching in iv. 6, he says nothing of its results. He does not teach a doctrine of a Harrowing of Hades. But he is not writing a full account of the subject here, as he does not write fully of the other subjects mentioned in iii. 18 f.—the Death, the Resurrection, the Ascension. Nor can we suppose that such a Preaching would be without effect upon spirits who had undergone the

[1] Rom. v. 12, ' death passed upon all men, for that all sinned,' vi. 23, ' the wages of sin is death ' ; S. Jas. i. 15, ' sin . . . bringeth forth death.'

great change of death and had realized some of the mysteries of the unseen world.

This interpretation of these Petrine passages is rendered the more probable by the fact that, in his sermon in Acts ii., S. Peter refers three times to Christ's presence in Hades, though he does not there refer to His Preaching. First, he says that God raised up Jesus, 'having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it' (ii. 24). 'Death' is here, as elsewhere, equivalent to 'Hades,' and some MSS. read 'Hades.' The reference is to Ps. xviii. 4, 5, where the Septuagint has *ὠδῖνες θανάτου* and *ὠδῖνες ᾅδου* in the successive verses (cf. cxvi. 3, *ὠδῖνες θανάτου* and *κίνδυνοι ᾅδου*).[1] Then he quotes Ps. xvi. 8–11, as spoken by David concerning Christ: 'Moreover my flesh shall dwell in hope, because Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades; neither wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption' (vv. 26, 27). David, being a prophet, and 'foreseeing this,' spoke of the Resurrection of Christ, that 'neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption' (ver. 31). The apostle's thoughts thus centred often on the presence of Christ's Spirit in Hades among the dead, the spirits in prison.[2]

[1] The 'pains of Hades' may be illustrated from 4 Esd. iv. 41: 'The Underworld and the chambers of souls are like the womb, for just as she who is in travail makes haste to escape the anguish of the travail, so do these places haste to deliver what has been entrusted to them from the beginning.' The dead must be delivered by Hades, which suffers pain in delivering them. Hence Christ can be called 'the First-born from the dead' (Col. i. 18, Rev. i. 5), the first delivered from Hades.

[2] The references to Christ's Soul (*ψυχή*) in this passage, but to His Spirit (*πνεῦμα*) in 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, are interesting as compared with the words in the Gospels about His Death—*ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα* (S. Matt. xxvii. 50); *ἐξέπνευσι* (S. Mark xv. 37, S. Luke xxiii. 46); *παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα* (S. John xix. 30). To whom did He commend His Spirit? To the Father: 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit' (S. Luke xxiii. 46). The Father's care is still exercised in Hades, and will not leave Christ's Soul (the word is taken from Ps. xvi. 10) in Hades. The Syriac version of S. Matt. xxvii. 50 reads, 'His Spirit ascended.'

Yet these passages of the first Epistle are not cited by early writers who have most to say about the Descent before the time of Clement of Alexandria and Origen. It is true that the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* has most likely derived the phrase, 'Hast Thou preached to those that slept,' from iii. 19 (cf. ἐκήρυξας, ἐκήρυξεν).[1] Justin seems to know the passage, but his reference to the Descent is brief. Cyprian, in his *Testimonia*, quotes iv. 6. Hippolytus evidently is thinking of iii. 19 when he speaks of Christ preaching to those who, 'in this life, had not allowed themselves to be convinced.' Though *Hermas* ascribes the Preaching to apostles, the author need not be ignorant of Christ's Preaching nor a witness against the interpretation of the Petrine passages. His ascription to apostles of a Preaching in Hades may rest on the impersonal εὐηγγελίσθη of iv. 6. The nature of the references to the Preaching in Ignatius and Irenæus may not have required a direct citation of the Petrine passages, the latter invariably falling back upon the prophetic apocryphon for his proof text. From S. Augustine's *Epistle to Evodius*, it is clear that, in his day, the Descent was popularly connected with iii. 19.[2] Rufinus quotes iii. 19 in discussing the Descent.[3] Theophylact, the earliest commentator on the Epistle, is quite emphatic on the passage as referring to representative examples of all who had the light of truth revealed to them.[4]

As we shall see, those who limited the Rescue or Enlighten-

[1] The Petrine passages 'may be contemplated in the saying of the elder (possibly Pothinus, Irenæus's predecessor in the see of Lyons) quoted by Irenæus (iv. 27. 2)' (Swete, p. 58). The word *evangelizantem* there used in the apocryphon of the prophet corresponds to εὐηγγελίσθη of iv. 6.

[2] For these passages see Chapter VII. G. Salmon, *Introduction to New Testament*[4], London, 1888, p. 478, refers to Irenæus's knowledge of S. Peter's Epistle and his not quoting it in connexion with the Descent in his teaching on that subject, as an example of 'the precarious character of the argument from silence.'

[3] Rufinus, *Expos. Symb.* 28.

[4] Plumptre, p. 115.

ment to Old Testament saints could not have founded their belief on the Petrine passages, and therefore discarded them, as did medieval theologians. Where a particular dogma is concerned, unsuitable passages, if not twisted out of their natural meaning, are apt to be passed over in silence. Here the witness of Marcion is interesting. He knew of a Preaching to and a Rescue of the disobedient of the Old Testament, and yet rejected the first Epistle of S. Peter, because in iii. 20 it asserts the salvation of righteous Noah. He was not saved, according to Marcion, for our Lord said, 'I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'

Whether the Petrine passages refer to the Descent or not, the doctrine itself, wherever derived, soon became a most vital one in early Christian thought.[1]

Enough is said in the apostolic writings to show that the Descent formed part of the oral teaching of the apostles, though possibly with no great definiteness: witness the divergence in the traditions shown in the limiting of the release to Old Testament saints (Ignatius, and cf. S. Matt. xxvii. 51 f. and Heb. xii. 22 f.), and in the preaching to others than they in 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, if this passage refers to the Descent.

Both in the Synoptic Gospels and more particularly in the Fourth Gospel, Christ appears as the Raiser of the dead or as He who awakens them from sleep, whether during His earthly ministry or in the future (cf. S. John v. 21, 29, vi. 40, xi. 25; cf. Rev. i. 18). The influence of this belief is seen in the rising of many saints at His Resurrection (S. Matt. xxvii. 52). But

[1] Swete, p. 58, says: 'On the whole, it is scarcely possible to account for the early legends of the Descent by supposing them to be based upon reminiscences of St. Peter's words. Their general acceptance may with more probability be traced to the influence of some early teaching which strove to combine the scattered hints of Scripture.' As an example of such teaching, Swete suggests the Justin-Irenæus apocryphon, 'possibly a fragment of a primitive homily.'

some of the earliest references to the results of the Descent belong to Christian circles in Asia Minor. Can the belief there be traced to S. John, whose account of Christ as Awakener of the dead is so emphatic? The words in S. John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad,' may be a reference to the Descent as taught by S. John, though, as ascribed to Christ before His Death, the words are an anachronism.[1] A similar reference to the Descent may be seen in Rev. x. 7: 'the good tidings which He declared to His servants the prophets'; and in i. 18 where Christ has the keys of Hades and of Death. Among the witnesses to the belief in Asia Minor are Ignatius, who speaks of Christ's raising the prophets from the dead (*Magnes.* ix. 2), among other references in his Epistles to the Descent; the *Epistle of the Apostles* (c. 27, Preaching, Baptism, removal to the Rest above); the Presbyter of Irenæus—a disciple of the apostles or of those who knew them (Iren. iv. 27. 1, 32. 1); Justin Martyr, who was baptized in Antioch; Marcion; and Irenæus himself. In other regions—Syria, Rome, North Africa—the belief has a comparatively early existence, as far as the evidence goes. Passages from writers in these various regions will presently be cited.

We reserve for separate treatment in a later chapter the curious passage in S. Matt. xxvii. 52 f., regarding the Resurrection of the saints. Some other synoptic passages will also be discussed later.

[1] Cf. Loofs, *TCHR* ii. 299; Gschwind, p. 224.

CHAPTER VI

THE DESCENT IN THE CREEDS AND IN THE CHURCH ORDERS

1. The Creeds

Though belief in our Lord's Descent to Hades existed in the Church from the apostolic age, it did not expressly appear in the Baptismal creeds at an early date. Rufinus (*c.* 400) says that *descendit ad inferna* existed in the creed used at Aquileia, and adds that the Roman creed did not contain the words, and that they were not found in the Eastern Churches.[1] This is true of Baptismal creeds, for the earliest approximation to the formula occurs in the allied creeds of the Synods of Sirmium, 359 A.D., of Niké in Thrace in the same year, and of Constantinople in 360 A.D. The Sirmian creed was put forth by Mark, bishop of Arethusa in Syria, and was probably the source of the others. The formula appears in the three creeds as follows :

Sirmium.	Niké.	Constantinople.
ἀποθανόντα	ἀποθανόντα	ἀποθανόντα
	καὶ ταφέντα	καὶ ταφέντα
καὶ εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια	καὶ εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια	καὶ εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια
κατελθόντα	κατελθόντα	κατεληλυθότα
καὶ τὰ ἐκεῖσε		
οἰκονομήσαντα		
ὃν πυλωροὶ ἅδου	ὃν αὐτὸς ὁ ἅδης	ὄντινα καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ ἅδης
ἰδόντες ἔφριξαν	ἐτρόμασε	ἔπτηξεν.[2]

The Sirmian formula, the earliest of the three, has no reference to the Burial as the others have. The effect on the door-

[1] *in Symb.* 18.

[2] Athanasius, *de Synodis*, i. 9, ii. 31 ; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 30.

keepers of Hades (Sirmium), or on Hades itself (Niké, Constantinople), is an echo of the descriptions of the Descent in current teaching and preaching (*e.g.* Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem), as we shall see later. The Sirmian phrase goes back to Job xxxviii. 17 (Sept., πυλωροὶ δὲ ᾅδου ἰδόντες σε ἔπτηξαν ;), a passage already made use of by contemporary writers ; and the terror of the doorkeepers is implied in earlier references to the destruction of the gates of Hades.[1] The personification of Hades in the other creeds occurs already in Scripture and is found in earlier notices of the Descent.[2] The fear or trembling of Hades is described in the *Odes of Solomon*.[3]

Was Mark the author of the creed with its reference to the Descent ? Different views are held on this and also regarding the source of the Descent formula. Some point to the likeness of this creed to that of the fourth creed of Antioch, which Mark and others drew up, as confirming his authorship. The references to the Descent echo language used by Cyril of Jerusalem in his *Catechetical Lectures*, and his influence is seen in other parts of the Sirmian creed.[4] Kattenbusch and Zahn maintain that the Sirmian creed was originally in Latin, and Zahn holds that it was drawn up with reference to the creed current in that part of Pannonia where the Synod was held, this creed, as he believes, already containing a reference to the Descent. Kattenbusch is of opinion that the insertion of *descendit ad inferna* in the creed of Aquileia had occurred at a date early enough to influence the Sirmian formula.[5] At a much later date Martin of Bracara in Spain, a native of Pan-

[1] Cf. passages cited from Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, and others, *infra*.

[2] Hos. xiii. 14 ; 1 Cor. xv. 55 (Death personified) ; Rev. vi. 8, xx. 13, 14.

[3] *Ode* xlii., see *infra*.

[4] A. E. Burn, *Introduction to the Creeds*, London, 1899, p. 203 ; Swete, p. 57.

[5] Kattenbusch, i. 261, ii. 898 ; T. Zahn, *Das apostolische Symbolum*, Leipzig, 1893, p. 72 f.

nonia, gives the Apostles' Creed with the Descent clause. But he may have been influenced by its existence in Gallican and Spanish creeds of his time.

The formula was lacking in the version of the Apostles' Creed in use at Rome and elsewhere, but as Rufinus shows in his book on the Creed the words *descendit ad inferna* were already inserted in the version used at Aquileia. The church at Aquileia was of great antiquity, and though it had received its creed from Rome, it had modified or added to its articles as protests against heresies. Rufinus did not know when this clause was added, and this suggests a considerable age for it. On the analogy of other Aquileian additions, the clause may have been intended as a protest against heresy, possibly Docetic, possibly some local denial of the Descent. Dr. Swete would assign the clause to the end of the second century.[1] This would give ample time for its influence on the Sirmian creed, if Kattenbusch's theory is correct. Aquileia was an emporium for the Roman province of Pannonia, and confessional formulæ as well as more material things may have entered the province from that city.

Others trace the Aquileian formula to the East, perhaps Syria. The outline of the faith in the Syriac *Teaching of Addai* (Thaddeus), from which or from an earlier version of which Eusebius cites, and which is certainly old, perhaps third century, contained a reference to the Descent.[2] Another reference is found in the doxology-creed in honour of our Lord, which concludes the Syriac *Didascalia*, as well as the Latin fragments of that work discovered by E. Hauler. The *Didas-*

[1] Swete, pp. 61, 62. The words 'reflect an absolutely primitive belief,' and one 'expressed in the phraseology of the early Latin Bible.' 'It was the privilege of the Church of Aquileia to hand down to a remote age, free from legendary accretions, an apostolic belief which affirms that the Incarnate Son consecrated by His presence the condition of departed souls.'

[2] See p. 139, *infra*.

calia dates from the earlier half of the third century, and the words run: 'crucified under Pontius Pilate and entered into rest (*dormivit*) that He might announce (*ut evangelizaret*) to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all His saints, both the end of the world and the resurrection which will be of the dead.'[1] Though these are not creeds, they are of the nature of creeds, and suggest how the Descent formula might be embodied in a local creed by some outstanding personage for a particular purpose. The Syrian creed, deduced by Dom Connolly from the writings of Aphraates, has a reference to the Descent—'went down to the place of the dead.'[2] Among Syrian Christians the Descent must have been a favourite doctrine, to judge by the frequent references to it in the *Odes of Solomon*, the writings of Ephrem Syrus and Aphraates, the *Acts of Thomas*, and the documents just cited.

The phrase in the Aquileian and later versions of the Creed—*descendit ad inferna*, *in infernum*, *ad infernum*—are Old Latin and Vulgate renderings of Old Testament phrases, Hebrew and Septuagint, *e.g.* 1 Sam. ii. 6, *κατάγει εἰς ᾅδου*; Ps. cxiii. 17, *οἱ καταβαίνοντες εἰς ᾅδου*; Isa. xiv. 11, *κατέβη εἰς ᾅδου*; Ezek. xxxi. 15, *κατέβη εἰς ᾅδου*.[3] As Dr. Swete points out, the application of the words of Ps. xvi. 10 by S. Peter to our Lord's departure from the Body, which, it should be noted, is the earliest apostolic reference to the Descent, would alone 'have been sufficient to justify the use of the words in the Creed.'[4]

[1] F. Funk, *Didaskalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, Paderborn, 1905, i. 382; E. Hauler, *Didascaliæ Apostolorum Fragmenta*, Leipzig, 1905, pp. 89–90. The Descent clause is lacking in the corresponding passage of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. See also Funk, *Die apost. Konstitutionen*, 1891, pp. 39 f., 50 f.

[2] Connolly, *Zeitschr. für NT Wissenschaft*, 1906, p. 202.

[3] Cf. Ps. liv. 15, cxxxviii. 8; Ezek. xxxi. 16, xxxii. 18; Wisd. xvi. 13; Tob. xiii. 2. Cf. Num. xvi. 30 f., Sept., *καταβήσονται ζῶντες εἰς ᾅδου*, quoted in *Apost. Const.* ii. 27. 5; cf. the reference to the same passage in vi. 3. 2, *κατῆλθον εἰς ᾅδου ζῶντες* = *Didascalia*, vi. 3. 4.

[4] Swete, *op. cit.* p. 60.

' Reference to the Descent does not occur in other summaries of doctrine given by theological writers of the earlier centuries, yet it is often emphasized elsewhere in their writings, as we shall see. But the Burial is constantly mentioned in these summaries, and we must therefore believe that the word ' buried ' covered a belief in the Descent, as Rufinus maintained—*vis tamen verbi eadem videtur esse in eo quod* sepultus est *dicitur*.[1] The thought of the burial of the Body at once called up that of the presence of the Soul in Hades. In Jewish thought the grave and Sheol were one, and this was true also to a great extent of Greek thought regarding the grave and Hades.[2]

It is significant that an anathema of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Council, 381 A.D., condemned those who denied that the Logos in His ' reasonable soul ' had descended to Hades.[3] The faith of the Catholic Church as contained in the first canon of the fourth Council of Toledo, 633 A.D., contains the words : ' descendit ad inferos, ut sanctos qui ibidem tenebantur erueret, devictoque mortis imperio resurrexit.'[4]

Before finally becoming part of the universally accepted Apostles' Creed in the eighth century, the Descent is mentioned in local forms of that creed. A seventh or eighth century MS. brought to light by Brattke contains a copy of a Gallican creed made in Gaul in the fourth century, with the words, *descendit ad inferos*.[5]

The recently discovered ' Faith of S. Jerome,' a confession of faith probably written by Jerome himself, with elements

[1] Rufinus, c. 18.

[2] See the discussion in Archbishop Ussher, ' An Answer to a Jesuit,' chapter 8, ' Of Limbus Patrum, and Christ's Descent into Hell,' *Works*, London, 1847, iii. 316 ff.

[3] Mansi, *Sacr. Concil. Collectio*, iii. 565.

[4] H. D. Bruns, *Canones Apostolorum et Conciliorum Veterum Selecti*, Berlin, 1839, i. 221.

[5] *Studien und Kritiken*, 1895, p. 152.

possibly 'drawn from his baptismal creed of Pannonia,' of which he was a native, has the words 'descended into Hell, trod down the sting of death.'[1] The creed of Pope Damasus is in some MSS. ascribed to Jerome, and contains: 'Qui devicto mortis imperio cum ea carne qua natus et passus et mortuus fuerat, resurrexit.'[2]

A sermon of Cæsarius of Arles has the following: 'credite eum ad inferna descendisse, diabolum obligasse, et animos sanctorum, quae sub custodia detinebantur liberasse secumque ad coelestem patriam perduxisse,' showing that the creed of Cæsarius, used in Southern Gaul towards the end of the fifth century, had the formula, *ad inferna descendit*.[3]

Venantius Fortunatus, the hymn-writer, who was bishop of Poitiers towards the beginning of the seventh century, has *descendit ad infernum* in his creed.[4]

The formula had some support in the Irish Church, as *descendit ad inferos* is found in the creed in the Bangor antiphonary of the seventh century.[5]

The Psalter of Pope Gregory III. (731–741 A.D.) also has the clause.[6]

The final form of the Apostles' Creed appears first, as is well known, in a work of the Frankish missionary Pirminius, who died in 758 A.D., and 'He descended into hell' is henceforward an article of the faith in the creed. Thus while several Western creeds had included the formula at an early period, it is still uncertain when it was added to the Roman form of the creed, whether before or after Pirminius. Dr. Burn is of

[1] Burn, in *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*, i. 714; Dom Morin, *Revue Benedictine*, Jan. 1904.

[2] Burn, *Introd. to the Creeds*, p. 245.

[3] The sermon will be found in those of pseudo-Augustine, No. 244.

[4] Burn, p. 201.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 228.

[6] *Ibid.* p. 233.

opinion that the expansion of the creed had already occurred at Rome before 700 A.D., and there are indications that Pirminius is quoting from a Roman source.[1]

Meanwhile the so-called Athanasian Creed, the *Quicunque Vult*, which in all probability was composed between 420 and 430 A.D., by Honoratus of Lerins, already contained the clause *descendit ad inferos*, or more probably *ad inferna*.[2] Dr. Burn has noted that the canon of the Council of Toledo quotes throughout the Athanasian Creed and the Creed of Pope Damasus, and when it refers to the Descent it gives the formula in the words of that creed—*descendit ad inferos*, and cites *devictoque mortis imperio* from Damasus.[3]

The presence of the clause in the *Quicunque Vult* may have been intended as an argument against the current heresy of Apollinarianism—the denial of a human soul in Christ. In His Soul He had descended to Hades, and this is clearly shown by theologians who opposed Apollinarius and his followers in the fourth and fifth centuries.[4] Whether its presence in local forms of the Apostles' Creed had a similar purpose is less certain. The phrase may have served useful catechetical ends in explaining more fully the previous reference to the Burial.

Although the confessional use of the Descent doctrine was only sporadic and occasional before the eighth century, on the other hand the doctrine itself was mentioned repeatedly by the Fathers and in the religious literature of the early centuries. There was, indeed, no more popular and elaborated part of the Christian faith. That our Lord was *apud inferos* is among the

[1] *Dicta abbatis Pirminii*; Burn, pp. 221, 234, 239.

[2] Burn, pp. 140 ff. The readings in MSS. vary, but *ad inferna* was doubtless earlier than *ad inferos*; Burn, p. 188.

[3] Burn, p. 153, and *The Athanasian Creed and its Early Commentaries*, in *TS* iv. 1. p. lxxix f.

[4] Cf. Pearson, *An Exposition of the Creed*, Oxford, 1857, p. 421; P. King, *The History of the Apostles' Creed*, London, 1737, p. 179 f.

things which S. Augustine says *testatissima veritate de Christo conscripta sunt.*

2. The Church Orders

This series of documents are manuals on Church life and order, the administration of sacraments, ordination, the hours of prayer, and the like. One group of these, with different names for each document, is based on the so-called 'Egyptian Church Order,' of which Coptic (Sahidic and Bohairic), Ethiopic, Arabic, and, in a fragmentary form, Latin versions exist. This document has now been shown by Dom Connolly to be the work of Hippolytus, written in Greek, and representing a writing of his hitherto known only by name, the *Ἀποστολικὴ παράδοσις*.[1] Its date is thus early in the third century. It was translated into Latin, Coptic dialects, Ethiopic, and Arabic.

On this work were based others, which are really redactions of it, of different dates: book viii. of the *Apostolic Constitutions* (*AC*, *c.* 375 A.D.), the *Testament of our Lord* (*c.* 350 A.D.), the so-called *Canons of Hippolytus* (*CH*), the date of which is uncertain (fourth to sixth centuries).

In these writings there are interesting references to the Descent into Hades, showing once more the significant place which it occupied in Christian thought in these early centuries. We shall give the parallel references in these documents, where they are found in any of them.

In the instructions for prayer at the ninth hour the passage shown on table opposite is found.

The reference to the Descent is lacking in the corresponding passages of *AC* and *CH*. The souls in Hades who are enlightened praise God: in other references to the Descent, as we shall see, this enlightenment becomes an actual light shining through

[1] Dom R. Hugh Connolly, *The So-called Egyptian Church Order and Derived Documents*, in *TS* viii. 4, p. 147, Cambridge, 1916.

'Egyptian Church Order.'				Testament of our Lord.
Ethiopic.	*Arabic.*	*Sahidic.*	*Latin.*	
'that ye may join in glorifying with the soul of	Prayer at the ninth hour is the pattern of 'how the souls	'that thou mayest know how the soul of		'with a hymn of praise like to the souls of those
the righteous ones, glorifying the living God,	of the righteous bless the true God,	the righteous ones blesses the Lord, the true God,	. . . 'Deum	who praise God,
who faileth not, who remembered His righteous ones and sent to them His Son, that is, His Word, to enlighten them :	who remembered His holy ones (and) sent to them His Son who is His Word that He might shine upon them :	He who remembered the holy ones and sent to them His Son, who is His Word, to shine upon them.	qui non mentitur qui memor fuit sanctorum suorum et emisit Verbum suum inluminantem eos.	who lieth not, who remembered His saints, and sent to them His Word and Wisdom to enlighten them.
because in that hour the side of Christ was pierced, and the blood and water flowed out,	because in that hour Christ was pierced in His side, and there came out from Him blood and water,	For in that hour was the side of the Christ pierced with a spear and blood and water came out,	Illa ergo hora in latere Christus punctus aquam et sanguem effudit	For in that hour life was opened to the faithful, and blood and water
and then the rest of the day shone when the evening came.' [1]	and after that He caused to shine on the others during the rest of that day until night.' [2]	and afterwards the rest of the day shone until evening.' [3]	et reliquam temporis diei inluminans ad vesperam deduxit.' [4]	flowed forth from the side of our Lord.' [5]

[1] *The Statutes of the Apostles, or Canones Ecclesiastici*, edited, with translations from Ethiopic and Arabic MSS., by Z. Horner, London, 1904, p. 183.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 264. [3] *Ibid.* p. 329. [4] *Didascaliæ apost. fragm. Veronensia Latina*, edited by E. Hauler, Leipzig, 1900, p. 119.

[5] *Testamentum Domini Nostri*, ed. Ignatius Ephraem II Rahmani, Mogun., 1899; *The Testament of our Lord*, ed. J. Cooper and A. J. MacLean, Edinburgh, 1902.

Hades. The words 'who remembered His righteous ones,' or 'His holy ones,' may be traced to an apocryphon cited by Justin and Irenæus, in which God is said to have 'remembered His dead ones who slept in the land of sepulture.' [1]

In the instructions regarding Baptism, the Creed which is recited to and accepted by the newly baptized contains the following reference to the release of the captives in Hades :

'Egyptian Church Order.'		
Ethiopic.	*Sahidic and Bohairic.*	*Arabic.*
'died by His own will for our salvation, and rose from the dead the third day, and released the captives.' [2]	'died voluntarily for our salvation withal, He rose in the third day, He released those who were bound.' [3]	'died by His own will to save us withal, and rose from the dead on the third day, and released the captives.' [4]

The Latin version and *Test.* do not have this reference, but, after the mention of the Resurrection, give the words 'vivus a mortuis' (Lat.), 'coming to life again from the dead' (*Test.*).[5]

The bishop's eucharistic prayer has also the interesting reference shown at top of opposite page.

The Arabic and Sahidic texts lack this passage. As will be seen, it is much fuller in *Test.* The difference between the Latin version—*et iustos inluminet*, and the Ethiopic—'and lead forth the holy ones,' is interesting, the Latin here corresponding to the enlightenment in Hades spoken of in the prayer at the ninth hour.

The *Testament of our Lord* and the Arabian *Didascalia* (appendix) contain an instruction on the Christian faith, or

[1] See pp. 85, 88, *infra.*
[2] Horner, p. 154.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 318, 448.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 254.
[5] Hauler, p. 110 ; Rahmani, p. 129.

'Egyptian Church Order.'		*Apostolic Constitutions*, viii. 12–33.	*Testament of our Lord.*
Ethiopic.	*Latin.*		
'spreading out His hands for suffering, that He might release the sufferers who trust in Thee.	'extendit manus cum pateretur, ut a passione liberaret eos qui in te crediderunt;	(After referring to Christ's crucifixion), 'that He might do away with sufferings, and release from death those for whom He came,	'stretched out His hands in the Passion, that from the passion and corruption of death, He might liberate those who hoped in Him, who when
He who was delivered up of His own will to suffering,	qui cumque traderetur voluntariæ passioni,		He was betrayed to His voluntary Passion, that He might raise the fallen, find the lost,
that He might abolish death, and burst the bonds of Satan,	ut mortem soluat, et vincula diaboli dirumpat,	and break the fetters of the devil,	give life to the dead, remove death, break the chains of the devil, perform the mind of the Father, trample on
and trample on Siola and lead forth the holy ones, that He might establish the covenant,	et infernum calcet et iustos inluminet, et terminum figat,	and draw men out of his craft.'[3]	Hades, open the way of life, direct the righteous to the light, fix the boundary, illumine the darkness, teach
and make known His Resurrection.'[1]	et resurrectionem manifestet.'[2]		the disciples, manifest His Resurrection.'[4]

'Mystagogia,' given to the faithful at the Eucharist after the dismissal of the catechumens.

The Mystagogia in *Test.* contains the following passage placed in the mouth of Death: 'Death, seeing Him descending in His soul to Sheol, was deceived, and hoped that He would be his usual food. But seeing in Him the beauty of Divinity, he cried, saying: "Who is this who endued with manhood subject to me, yet conquers me? Who is this who takes by force from me the flesh delivered to destruction? Who is this

[1] Horner, p. 140.
[2] Hauler, p. 106.
[3] Funk, i. 508.
[4] Rahmani, p. 43, i. 23.

endued with what is earthly and yet is heavenly? Who is this born in corruption, but who suffers no corruption? Who is this exempt from my laws? Who is this plunderer of those who are mine? Who is this who fights with the fiery power of death and conquers darkness? What is that new glory in this scene? Who is this who hinders me from effecting what I desire? Who is this new one dead without sin? Who is this who extinguishes darkness with manifold splendour, nor permits me to rule over those who are mine, but draws souls, given to me, into Heaven? What is that glory which hinders the body from being corruptible? Who is this whom I am not able to grasp? What is that glory which those who are around cannot look into? Alas, far from Him and from His must I flee, for I cannot hurt them. For this is Christ who was crucified, by whom those who belong to the left claim to hold to the right, and those who were below are brought on high, and those who were behind are set in front,[1] when He rose from the dead, trod on Sheol, destroyed death by death, and, rising the third day, gave thanks to the Father." '[2]

The appendix to the Arabian *Didascalia* may have been added by the compiler from the *Testament* after 400 A.D.; the passage on the Descent in the Mystagogia, though similar to that in *Test.*, is longer: 'And He descended into Hades also after He died and revived all. And when Death saw Him, after He descended to it, he was perturbed and thought to find in Him food according to his desire. But when he saw the beauty of Divinity in Him, with a great voice he cried, saying: "Who is this who is above me nor like those men in me? Who is this who renews from destruction the body which I slew? Who is this, born without corruption, and who overthrows corruption while He is incorrupt? Who is this who puts on earthly

[1] See Additional Notes, 1.

[2] Rahmani, p. 59 f., i. 28; Cooper and MacLean, p. 87.

manhood, yet is from Heaven ? Who is this alien from my law ? Who is this who draws my people from me ? Who is this whom the receptacles of darkness cannot hold ? Who is this Man in this new form, whose power hinders me from doing what I would ? Who is this new One endued with funeral vestment who is without sin ? Who is this who destroys by His glory the treasurer of darkness, and does not permit him to tread under foot those who are mine, but leads souls on high which were consigned to me ? What is this glory incorruptible which I cannot destroy ? Who is He whom I cannot assault ? Who is He whom this light surrounds which does not grow less ? Who is this who puts me down, lest I destroy His in whom I have nothing ? This is Christ, who was crucified, by whom those on the left pass to the right, those who were down He leads forth so that now they are on high, and those who were behind are now in front. He rose from the dead, and conquered Hades, and by His death drove Death into hiding." ' The passage ends by telling how Christ, after He rose, gave thanks to the Father.[1]

A similar address, not of Death but of Hades, is found in the treatise *de Virginitate*, which E. von der Goltz, its most recent editor, attributes to S. Athanasius (*c.* 328–329); but here it occurs in connexion with the advice to pray at the twelfth hour, ' for in it our Lord descended to Hades, and Hades, seeing Him, shuddered and was astonished, saying : " Who is this descending in authority and great power ? Who is this breaking the brazen gates of Hades and shattering the adamantine bolts ? [2] Who is this descending from Heaven, crucified, and not conquered by my Death ? Who is this loosing the bonds of those conquered by me ? Who is this, in His own death, destroying my Death ? " ' [3]

[1] *Did. Arab., capita additicia,* xxxix. 23 f., in Funk, ii. 135.

[2] Cf. Ps. cvii. 16 and Isa. xlv. 2, frequently quoted in passages on the Descent.

[3] Athan. *de Virg.* c. 16, ed. E. von der Goltz, in *TU* xiv. (N.F.), 2a, Leipzig, 1905.

The twelfth hour is a time for prayer and praise, because Christ conquers the terrors of darkness, having conquered Death and Hades, and because, having risen, He sang praises to the Father.[1]

If von der Goltz is right in his date for the *de Virginitate*, then this passage may be the source of that in the *Testament*, unless, as he suggests, some Egyptian tradition, the literary source of which is no longer preserved, is being drawn upon.[2] The source, however, may have been some early form of the so-called *Gospel of Nicodemus*, which contains similar and nearly parallel questions of Hades and Death. They are also found in Homilies attributed to Eusebius of Emesa, which will be cited later, in the Homily for Easter Eve ascribed to Epiphanius, in the *Acts of Thomas*, in the *Questions of Bartholomew*, and in the *Book of the Resurrection*.[3]

Christ's praising the Father at His Resurrection, referred to in all three documents, occurs also in Synesius: 'Thou didst offer strains of thanksgiving to the Father.' He also speaks of Hades trembling and of the souls being released.[4] Christ's celebrating the Father with praise at the midnight hour is given in *Test.* as the reason why the priests and the more perfect of the people should do the same at that hour.[5] But another reason for midnight praise is given in the 'Egyptian Church Order' and in the 'Canons of Hippolytus,' namely, a tradition of the presbyters that all creation praises God at that hour. The passage is of sufficient interest to be given in parallel columns:

[1] *de Virg.* c. 20.
[2] von der Goltz, *op. cit.* p. 108.
[3] See pp. 140 ff., *infra.*
[4] See p. 118, *infra.*
[5] *Test.* i. 32, ii. 24.

'Egyptian Church Order.'				Canons of Hippolytus, xxvii. 2.
Ethiopic.	*Arabic.*	*Sahidic.*	*Latin.*	
The presbyters	The elders	The presbyters themselves	Hi, qui tradiderunt	Our fathers
who handed down to us	set us the	delivered this work unto us,	nobis, seniores	
thus instructed us	example.	and they instructed us in this way,	ita nos docuerunt,	say
that at this hour all creation prays		because in that hour all creation is quiet	quia hac hora omnis creatura quiescit ad momentum	in that hour every creature
to God.		for blessing God.	quoddam, ut laudent Dominum.	prepares for the service of the Divine glory,
The stars and the plants stand up and the waters stand up at that hour,		The stars and the trees and the waters are as those who stand up,	Stellas et arbusta et aquas stare in ictu,	
and all the hosts of the heavens, the angels,	All the ranks of the angels	all the host of the angels	et omne agmen angelorum	and the orders of angels
ministering at that hour,	ministering	offer worship	ministrat ei; in hac hora,	
with the soul of the righteous, glorify God.[1]	with the souls of the righteous ones, praise God at that hour.[2]	and the souls of the righteous sing hymns to God the Almighty at that hour.[3]	una cum justorum animabus laudare Deum.[4]	and the souls of the righteous bless God.

[1] Horner, p. 184. [2] *Ibid.* p. 264. [3] *Ibid.* p. 330. [4] Hauler, p. 120.

All these assign as a further testimony our Lord's words: 'At midnight a cry was heard, Behold, the bridegroom cometh.' [1]

[1] It should be noted that *Test.* assigns the notice of all the orders of creation praising God to the prayer at dawn, ii. 24. The *Benedicite* is, of course, the source of the reference to the orders of creation, and among them the souls of the righteous are, as Dom Connolly shows, souls in Hades. If Hippolytus is the author of the 'Egyptian Church Order,' his comment on the *Benedicite* justifies this, for he says that 'the spirits and souls of the righteous' are 'the spirits of the *ταρταρούχων* angels and the souls of the righteous,' both being *τὰ καταχθόνια* (*Comm. on Daniel*, ii. 29. 12, in *Die griech. christl. Schriftsteller*, Leipzig, 1897, i. 1. 98; Connolly, *TS* viii. 4. 167–68).

CHAPTER VII

PATRISTIC REFERENCES TO THE DESCENT

In this and the following chapter the references to the Descent in the works of the Fathers and in apocryphal writings of the first three centuries will be cited as fully as possible. Of later writings, with some exceptions, only the most characteristic passages will be given. The *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the Homilies of Eusebius of Alexandria and of Pseudo-Epiphanius on the Descent will be the subject of succeeding chapters.

Ignatius

The earliest patristic references to the Descent occur in the Epistles of Ignatius, about the beginning of the second century. They are made in such a manner as to suggest that he is speaking of a well-known belief. In his *Epistle to the Magnesians* (c. 9) he writes: 'How shall we be able to live apart from Him whom the prophets, being His disciples by the Spirit, looked for as their Teacher? Therefore He whom they justly waited for, came and raised them from the dead' (*παρὼν ἤγειρεν αὐτοὺς ἐκ νεκρῶν*).[1] Another passage, from the *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (c. 5), runs: 'Let us also love the prophets, because they have proclaimed the Gospel, and hoped in Him, and waited for Him, in whom also, believing, they were saved, in the unity

[1] Lightfoot comments on the first passage: 'Our Lord is assumed to have visited (*παρών*) the souls of the patriarchs and prophets in Hades, to have taught them (*ὡς διδάσκαλον*) the truths of the Gospel, and to have raised them (*ἤγειρεν*) to Paradise or Heaven' (*The Ap. Fathers*, pt. 2, ii. § 1).

of Jesus Christ, being holy men, worthy of love and admiration, who received testimony from Jesus Christ, and are numbered in the Gospel of our common hope.' And a little later in the same Epistle (c. 9), Christ is called 'the Door of the Father, by which Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets and the apostles and the church enter in.'

These passages show that the prophets and others, both in this life and after death, expected, hoped, and waited for Christ. He came (*i.e.* to the region of the dead) as their Teacher. They believed in Him and were saved, and were raised from the dead, *i.e.* to a higher state, made participants in the Kingdom. Elsewhere in these Epistles Christ is spoken of as 'our common hope' or 'our hope.'[1] He is the Door through whom all alike enter, or are raised, or saved.

A further passage in the *Epistle to the Trallians* (c. 9) has reference to the interest of those in Hades in the Death of Christ: Christ 'was truly crucified and dead, those in Heaven and on earth and under the earth being spectators of it.'

Polycarp

In his Epistle to the Philippians, S. Polycarp implies the Descent by his citation of S. Peter's sermon in Acts ii. 24, where he alters one, if not two of the words: ὃν ἤγειρεν (for ἀνέστησεν) ὁ Θεὸς λύσας τὰς ὠδῖνας τοῦ ᾅδου (v.l. in Acts ii. 24, θανάτου, ᾅδου).

Justin Martyr

About the middle of the second century Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (c. 72), cites an apocryphon which he charges the Jews with having deleted from the Book of Jeremiah, though it was still to be found in some synagogue

[1] Eph. c. 21; Phil. c. 11; Trall. cc. 1, 2.

copies: 'And the Lord God of Israel remembered His dead ones, who slept in the earth of dust, and He descended to preach to them His salvation.'[1] This apocryphon is cited several times by Irenæus, and its origin will be discussed under the citations from him. Dr. Bigg argued that Justin comments on the story of Noah in such a way as suggests 1 S. Pet. iii. 18 f. Noah is a type of baptism, and the eight persons are referred to, while there is a certain correspondence in the Greek words—*ἀναγεννᾶν, διεσώθη, δι' ὕδατος*.[2] Justin's reference to the Jews' mistaken idea that Christ, being put to death, would remain in Hades like some common man, points also to his belief in the Descent.[3]

'The Shepherd of Hermas'

To the same period as that of Justin belongs this work, in which a preaching in Hades is ascribed, not to our Lord, but to the apostles and teachers. These 'having fallen asleep in power and faith of the Son of God, preached to them who had fallen asleep before (*τοῖς προκεκοιμημένοις*), and they gave the seal of the preaching (*i.e.* baptism) to them.' Those who were thus ministered to were prophets, ministers of God, and righteous men of the two ages before them, *i.e.* from Adam to Abraham, and from Abraham to Moses. 'They (the apostles) went down (*κατέβησαν*) with them into the water, and again came up (*ἀνέβησαν*). But these went down while they were alive, and came up again alive, but those who slept before descended as dead (*νεκροί*) but came up alive. Through these therefore they received life and knew the Son of God; hence they came up with them (the apostles) and were fit to come

[1] *Ἐμνήσθη δὲ Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἀπὸ Ἰσραὴλ τῶν νεκρῶν αὐτοῦ, τῶν κεκοιμημένων εἰς γῆν χώματος, καὶ κατέβη πρὸς αὐτοὺς εὐαγγελίσασθαι αὐτοῖς τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ.*

[2] *Dial.* c. 138; C. Bigg, *Peter and Jude* (*International Critical Commentary*), Edinburgh, 1901, p. 10.

[3] *Dial.* c. 99.

into the building of the tower.' Those who heard the good news and received the seal are represented by stones taken out of the water to build the tower which the Shepherd sees in his vision. The meaning may be that they were removed from Hades.[1]

There is here a link between baptism and Descent into Hades as in 1 S. Pet. iii. 19. The passage may be an expansion of 1 S. Pet. iv. 6, 'the Gospel preached to them that were dead' (*νεκροῖς*), the Petrine word *ζωοποιεῖν* having been used shortly before. The same words *καταβαίνω*, *ἀναβαίνω* are also used throughout as in Eph. iv. 9, *ὁ καταβὰς αὐτός ἐστι καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς*.

Marcion

The Gnostic Marcion is an important witness to the general acceptance of the Descent doctrine in the first half of the second century, since he takes it as a well-known doctrine to which he gives an unusual form. The righteous of the Old Covenant obeyed the Demiurge. Those who disobeyed him were faithful to the Supreme God, and were therefore higher than they. Hence Christ descended to Hades to deliver them. Irenæus reports that Marcion taught how Cain and all like him, the Sodomites and Egyptians and all like them, and all the heathen (*gentes*), who had walked in evil of every kind, were saved by Christ in His Descent. They ran (*accurrissent*) to Him and were taken up into His kingdom. But Abel, Enoch, Noah, their righteous descendants, and the patriarchs in Abraham's Bosom, with all the prophets and those who pleased the God of the Old Testament, did not partake of this salvation. 'Because they knew that their God was always tempting them, they suspected Him of tempting them then, and accordingly

[1] *Shepherd of Hermas, Simil.* ix. 15, 16.

did not hasten to Jesus, nor believe His preaching, and accordingly their souls remained in Hades.' [1]

A well-known current doctrine is thus perverted after Marcion's fashion, though, as Huidekoper suggests, Irenæus may have exaggerated his teaching. Marcion may have supposed the Jews in Hades to be as stiff-necked as on earth. Hence the Gentiles were favoured by Christ's teaching there—the Egyptians and the men of Sodom, in accordance with our Lord's suggestion that the men of Sodom would have repented had they seen His mighty works (S. Matt. xi. 23). 'For the salvation of Cain and similar worthies there is no plausible ground discernible in Marcion's system.' [2] Marcion's belief in the salvation of the men of Sodom in Hades may be illustrated from the *Adumbrationes* ascribed to Clement of Alexandria. Commenting on Jude, ver. 7, '"Even as Sodom and Gomorrha," the writer says, to whom the Lord shows that more indulgence was shown (*i.e.* than to the fallen angels of ver. 6), and that on being instructed, they repented,' *i.e.* presumably when Christ preached in Hades.

S. Irenæus

S. Irenæus is a clear witness to the Descent, not only in his own teaching, but in what he reports of the teaching on this subject of a certain Presbyter 'who had heard from those who had seen the apostles and from their scholars,' and whom he also calls 'the Elder, the disciple of the apostles.' [3] This 'Elder' may have been Pothinus, his predecessor in the

[1] Iren. *adv. Hær.* i. 27. 3; Epiph. *Hær.* xlii. 4; Theodoret, *Hær. Fab.* i. 24. E. de Faye holds that Marcion did not himself teach this, but that it may have been an addition to his teaching among the Marcionites of the time of Irenæus, since Tertullian in *adv. Marcionem* makes no reference to it. *Gnostiques et Gnosticisme*, Paris, 1913, p. 127.

[2] Huidekoper, p. 6.

[3] Iren. iv. 27. 1, 32. 1.

bishopric of Lyons. As the testimony of this Elder to the Descent must be of early date, we shall cite first what he says before passing to Irenæus's own teaching. This Presbyter taught that it is enough for the ancients, specifically David and Solomon, to be rebuked for their sins by the Scriptures, without our reproaching them. They had an opportunity of enlightenment by Christ in Hades. For, as the Presbyter said, 'the Lord descended to the parts under the earth, announcing to them also His advent and the remission of sins to such as believe in Him. All those believed in Him who were hoping for Him, *i.e.* who foretold His coming and obeyed His commands, righteous men, prophets, and patriarchs, whose sins He remitted, even as He did to us.' As such men did not charge us with sins wrought before Christ was manifested in us, so we should not charge the like on them who sinned before Christ came. 'They indeed had the Lord's death for the healing and remission of their sins.' [1]

We turn now to the teaching of Irenæus himself. In one passage he says that Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth to seek the sheep that was lost, thus citing Eph. iv. 9 and S. Luke xv. 4. In another he gives as proofs of the Descent our Lord's words: 'as Jonas abode in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall also the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth' (S. Matt. xii. 40); S. Paul's words: 'But that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?' (Eph. iv. 9); and those of Ps. lxxxvi. 13: 'Thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost Hell.'

In no less than five passages in his work on Heresies and once in his *Epideixis*, extant in an Armenian version, Irenæus cites the Jeremiah apocryphon quoted by Justin, assigning it once to Jeremiah (iv. 22. 1), once to Isaiah (iii. 20. 4), and again

[1] *adv. Hær.* iv. 27. 1 f.

to 'the prophet,' 'the others,' or without reference (iv. 33. 1, 12; v. 31. 1). In the *Epideixis* (c. 78) it is assigned to Jeremiah. The varying methods of citation show that Irenæus was quoting from memory, for though the Greek text of his work does not exist in full, the Latin translation is literal. Occasionally he adds some words of his own. A comparison of these passages with Justin's citation may be useful (see table on next page).

Resch considers that the work here quoted was not the prophet Jeremiah, but an early Christian apocryphal Book of Jeremiah in the form of an Old Testament prophecy. He also traces the influence of the language of this passage in S. Matt. xxvii. 52, *τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων*, and in 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, and iv. 6, *καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη*.[1] But it is more probable that, as Dr. Swete shows, the sources of the apocryphon are these passages themselves and Dan. xii. 2, *πολλοὶ τῶν καθευδόντων ἐν γῆς χώματι ἐξεγερθήσονται*. The word *καθευδόντων* is altered to *κεκοιμημένων* under the influence of S. Matt. xxvii. 52. The passage may be part of an early Homily, which, becoming popular, acquired a place in some Christian copies of the prophets.[2] According to C. Schmidt it must have existed in the early part of the second century and was popular in Christian circles in Asia Minor, playing a great part in prophetic announcements of the Descent as a prophetic text.[3]

The context of some of the citations of the apocryphon is interesting. In the *Epideixis* Irenæus prefixes the words, 'And in Jeremiah He announces His Death and His Descent to Hades in this manner.' Then follows the apocryphon, and he adds: 'Here is clearly shown the purpose of His Death; for

[1] A. Resch, *Aussercan. Paralleltexte zu d. Evangelien*, in *TU* x. 2. 373 ff.

[2] Swete, p. 59. In the *Apost. Constitutions*, v. 7. 3, the Daniel passage is cited with *κεκοιμημένων* for *καθευδόντων*.

[3] C. Schmidt, in *TU* xliii. 472. For a full discussion of the apocryphon see also Gschwind, p. 220 f.

Justin, *Dial.* c. 72.	Irenæus, *adv. Hær.* iii. 20. 4.	Irenæus, *adv. Hær.* iv. 22. 1.	Irenæus, *adv. Hær.* iv. 33. 1.	Irenæus, *adv. Hær.* iv. 33. 12.	Irenæus, *adv. Hær.* v. 31. 1.	Irenæus, *Epideixis*, c. 78.
ἐμνήσθη δέ	et commemoratus est	recommemoratus est	et recommemoratus	rememoratus est	commemoratus est	The Lord, the Holy One of Israel
Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἀπὸ Ἰσραήλ	Dominus sanctus Israel	Dominus sanctus Israel		Dominus sanctus	Dominus	remembered
τῶν νεκρῶν αὐτοῦ	mortuorum suorum	mortuorum suorum	mortuorum suorum	mortuorum suorum	sanctorum mortuorum suorum	His dead ones
τῶν κεκοιμημένων	qui dormierant	qui prædormierunt	qui ante dormierant	qui prædormierunt	qui ante dormierunt	who before slept
εἰς γὴν χώματος	in terra sepultionis	in terra defossionis		in terra limi	in terra sepelitionis	in the earth
καὶ κατέβη πρὸς αὐτούς	et descendit ad eos	et descendit ad eos	et descendens ad eos	et descendit ad eos	et descendit ad eos	and descended to them
εὐαγγελίσασθαι αὐτοῖς	evangelizare	uti evangelizaret eis	uti erueret eos	uti erigeret	extrahere eos	in order to announce His
τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ	salutem quæ est ab eo	salutare suum				salvation
	ut salvaret eos	ad salvandum eos	et salvaret eos	ad salvandum eos	et salvare eos	in order to save them.

His Descent into Hades was for the deliverance of the dead.'[1] In *adv. Hær.* v. 31. 1, as against those who say that, dying on the Cross, Christ would presently have departed on high, leaving His Body to the earth, he maintains: 'But now for three days He abode in the place of the dead as the prophet saith of Him'; then follows the apocryphon and other proofs cited above. Again (iv. 22. 1), Christ's washing the disciples' feet signified that in the last time all who from the beginning are disciples, being cleansed and washed from that which is of death, may come to the life of God. Further, Christ's ministering meat to the disciples as they lay, signifies 'such as lay in the earth (*recumbentes in terra*), to whom He came to minister life, as saith Jeremiah: The holy Lord, etc.' When Christ found the disciples asleep the first time in Gethsemane, He let it pass, signifying God's patience to the slumbering of men. 'But coming again the second time He awakened and roused them, intimating that His Passion is the awakening of the sleeping disciples, for whom also He went down into the lower parts of the earth, to behold with His eyes the unfinished part of Creation; of whom also He said to His disciples: Many prophets and just men have desired to see and hear the things which ye see and hear' (S. Matt. xiii. 17). He then goes on to show, as other Fathers did, that a strict theodicy demanded that those who lived before the Incarnation should share in the Gospel. For Christ did not come on their account only who believed on Him in the times of Tiberius Cæsar, nor did God provide only for men now existing, but for all who, from the beginning, because of their excellency in their generation, both feared and loved God, and conversed justly and piously with their neighbours, and desired to see Christ and to hear His voice. All such He will raise from their sleep before the rest in His second coming,

[1] Iren. *Epideixis*, c. 78, Armenian text and translation, by K. Ter-Mekerttschiand and E. Ter-Minassiantz, *TU* xxxi. 1. 42.

and will awaken both them, and the rest who shall be judged, and will give them a part in His kingdom. For there is One God who, as He guided the Patriarchs along His own providential ways,[1] so He justified the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith (Rom. iii. 30). For as in those who came first we were prefigured and foretold, so they in their turn are completely drawn out in us, *i.e.* in the Church, and receive their reward for their labours. Then he quotes the passage in S. John iv. 35 ff. ending, 'Others laboured, and ye are entered into their labours,' and shows that they who laboured were the patriarchs and prophets who prefigured our faith and spread abroad the coming of the Son of God.

Referring to the 'seed of Abraham' as the Church, and to the fact that neither Abraham nor his seed receive an inheritance in the land, but shall receive it at the Resurrection, Irenæus continues with what is surely a reference to the Preaching in Hades (v. 33. 1): 'And with a view to this, when coming to His Passion, that He might preach to Abraham and those who were with him that Gospel which revealed their inheritance—when with the Cup in His hands he had given thanks and had drunk of it, and given it to His disciples, He said to them, Drink ye all of it' (with the rest of the passage, S. Matt. xxvi. 27–29). This passage is interesting because in the bishop's eucharistic prayer in the *Church Order* and *Testament of our Lord* there is the same association of Christ's Passion, His Descent, and Preaching in Hades, with the institution of the Eucharist.[2]

In another passage (iii. 22. 4), Irenæus says that 'our Lord being born, the First-born of the dead, and receiving the ancient fathers into His bosom, regenerated (*regeneravit*) them to the life of God.' And (iv. 31. 2) 'the Lord observed

[1] Cf. Wisdom x. 17: Wisdom 'guided' holy souls 'along a marvellous way.'

[2] See p. 77, *supra*.

the law of the dead, that He might be made the First-born of the dead, and lodged unto the third day in the lower parts of the earth. . . . The Lord, having departed in the midst of the shadow of death, where the souls of the dead are, afterwards rose again in the Body.'

Irenæus also holds that the iron which floated when a stick was cast into the water signified the lifting up of souls through the wood (the Cross), Christ being able to lift up souls who follow His ascent. It also indicated the many souls who ascended and were seen in their bodies along with the Descent of the holy Soul of Christ (S. Matt. xxvii. 52).[1]

Irenæus used the Descent of Christ's Soul to Hades as an argument against those who insisted that the soul, at death, ascended to the super-celestial region. To this, and to the question of how far he believed in a release of souls from Hades by Christ's presence there, we shall return in a later chapter.

Tertullian

Tertullian opposed the current belief that Christ, by His Descent to Hades, emptied it in order that the faithful should not go there at death. He disproves this by the Descent itself, maintaining that all souls, good and bad alike, go to Hades. The only exception are martyrs. 'No one on becoming absent from the body is at once a dweller in the presence of the Lord, except by the prerogative of martyrdom, whereby he gets a lodging in Paradise, not in Hades.'[2]

Hades is a subterranean region, and in it all souls are enclosed. Christ, at His death, descended to Hades, to the souls of the patriarchs. Abraham's Bosom, though not a heavenly region, is yet a higher part of Hades, which offers meanwhile a place of refreshment to the souls of the righteous. In Hades

[1] Irenæus, fragment 26, in Oxford *Library of the Fathers*, p. 551.
[2] *de Resur. Carnis*, 43.

there are punishments and consolations (*supplicia et refrigeria*). *Habes pauperem et divitem*, a reference to S. Luke xvi. 19 f. Christ complied with the law of death, remaining *apud inferos* in the form and condition of a dead man. His purpose in going thither was to make the patriarchs and prophets partakers of Himself (*compotes sui faceret*). Of those who maintained that these removed (*migraverint*) to Paradise in the retinue of the Lord's Resurrection, he asks how it is that the region of Paradise as revealed to S. John 'under the altar' contained none but souls of martyrs, and how Perpetua in her vision saw only fellow-martyrs there.[1]

Alluding to Isa. xlv. 2, Ps. cvii. 10, 14, 16, he tells how Christ shattered the adamantine gates of Death and the brazen doors of the Underworld.[2]

In view of the emphatic language which Tertullian uses regarding the Old Testament saints being still in Hades, the passage in his *de Penitentia* where, laying stress on repentance, he says, 'Adam by confession has been restored to his own Paradise,' is curious.[3] The reference may be to apocryphal works in which Adam's penitence was a notable theme. The belief that Adam was rescued by Christ from Hades became a common theme. We cannot be certain that this is Tertullian's meaning here.

S. Cyprian

Cyprian says little of the Descent, but, in his *Testimonia*, speaks of Christ's not remaining in the Underworld, proving this from Ps. xxx. 3, xv. 10, and iii. 5. There also, in proof of the statement that none can reach the Father but through Christ, he cites 1 S. Pet. iv. 6, 'In hoc enim et mortuis praedicatum

[1] *de Anima*, 7, 55, 58; *adv. Marcionem*, iv. 34.
[2] *de Resur. Carnis*, 44.
[3] *de Penit.* 12. See James, p. 4.

est ut suscitentur.'[1] This suggests that he believed that others than the Old Testament saints had heard and benefited by the Preaching in Hades. *Suscitentur* interprets rather than translates S. Peter's ζῳοποιηθείς, and it recalls S. Ignatius's 'raised them from the dead' and the passage in the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Under the same heading Cyprian also cites 1 S. Pet. iii. 18: 'Christ hath died . . . that He might present us to God,' but does not go on to v. 19, the Preaching to the spirits in prison.[2] Among the passages in proof of Christ's rising from the Underworld, Ex. xix. 10, 11 is cited: 'The Lord said to Moses, Descend and testify to the people, and consecrate them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothing, and be ready against the day after to-morrow. For on the third day the Lord will descend upon Mount Sinai.'[3] Does this mean that Moses, as Origen taught, was a forerunner of Christ in Hades, foretelling His coming thither?

Hippolytus

In his work on 'Antichrist' Hippolytus says that Christ was ordained Lord of things in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth (*τὰ καταχθονία*). He is Lord of things on earth, because He became Man in the midst of men to recreate our Adam through Himself; and of things under the earth, because He was numbered among the dead, preaching (*εὐαγγελιζόμενος*) to the souls of the saints, conquering Death through death. S. John Baptist first preached to those in Hades as a forerunner of Christ, announcing that the Saviour would descend, ransoming (*λυτρούμενον*) the souls of the saints from the hand of Death.[4] The ransoming follows the Preaching. Death is regarded as Lord of the Underworld.

A fragment of his work on the 'Holy Pasch,' preserved in

[1] Cyprian, *Test. adv. Judæos*, ii. 24, 25.
[2] Cyprian, *Test.* ii. 27.
[3] *Ibid.* ii. 25.
[4] *de Antichr.* cc. 26, 45.

Syriac and in citations by Nicetas, has the following passage: 'Since the host of holy souls far below and long ago were robbed of the presence of God, the Holy Ghost, that they might enter into familiar intercourse with the Divine Soul, spoke to their profit the following words: We have not seen His form, but we have heard His voice.[1] Therefore it became Him, that when He went to Hades, He preached to those there, who in this life had not allowed themselves to be convinced. On that account, therefore, the doorkeepers of Hades trembled and He broke and destroyed the gates of Hades, and the iron doors and bolts were broken.[2] . . . See, the Only-begotten entered as Soul among souls. The Body lay in the grave, not robbed of the Divinity, but indeed He, with the flesh, guarded the world, but robbed Sheol with the Soul.'[3]

One of the fragments of Hippolytus, 'Upon the Great Ode' (probably an early hymn), runs: 'He who delivered out of the lowest Hades the first-formed man (*πρωτόπλαστον*) fallen from earth and bound in the fetters of death; He who came down from above and raised up the fallen to the height (*τὸν κάτω εἰς τὰ ἄνω*); He who was the Preacher of the dead (*ὁ τῶν νεκρῶν εὐαγγελιστής*), the Ransomer of souls, and the Resurrection of the dead . . . Himself the heavenly One, He bore the terrestrial on high . . . and making man, who turns to dust and forms food for the serpent, unconquerable as adamant, and that, too, when hung upon the tree, He declared him lord

[1] These words are part of an apocryphon more fully cited by S. Clement (p. 99, *infra*) and also in Hippolytus's account of the Naassenes (*Refut. Hær.* v. 8), though there in a different connexion. It seems to combine Job xxviii. 22 (Sept.) and Deut. iv. 12.

[2] Gschwind, p. 46, connects 'in this life' with *πότε* in 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, and Hades with *φυλακή*.

[3] Hippolytus, *περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πάσχα*, in *Die griech. christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1897, i. 2. 269. Cf. the citation from Origen, *c. Celsum*, *infra*, regarding Christ's disembodied soul among the souls of the dead. The idea that the Body in the grave and the Soul in Hades were still one with the Divine Logos is common in the Fathers.

over his victor, and is thus Himself proved conqueror by the tree.' [1]

The work *On the End of the World* gives as subjects of preaching Christ's Descent to Hades, His ascent and redemption of spirits that were of old and the destruction of Death, His life-giving awaking from the dead, and His re-creation of the whole world.[2]

In these passages Hippolytus contemplates a deliverance of souls from Hades, as in his work on Antichrist (cc. 30, 31, 59) he speaks of prophets, martyrs, and apostles having entered their rest in the Kingdom of Christ. But in his work *On the Universe* (if it is by him), he speaks of all souls, good and bad, as detained in different parts of Hades until the time which God has determined.[3] This may indicate a change in his opinion, perhaps under the influence of Tertullian, as C. Schmidt suggests.[4]

S. Clement of Alexandria

With S. Clement of Alexandria we come to a wider view of the Descent, since he includes righteous Pagans at least, as well as the saints of the Old Covenant, among those who benefited by the Preaching. This was in accordance with the more generous or liberal aspect of his theology, though as concerns the Descent, it is not quite clear how far he was disposed to carry it. He devotes a chapter of his *Miscellanies* to the subject, and in that, as well as in an earlier reference, takes the passage in the *Shepherd of Hermas* on the apostles preaching and baptizing in Hades as the basis of his teaching.

[1] Hippol., Εἰς τὴν ὠδὴν τὴν μεγάλην, in *Die griech. christ. Schrift.* i. 2. 83. For τὸν κάτω εἰς τὰ ἄνω cf. *Odes of Solomon* xxii., 'up from the regions below.' See Additional Notes, 1.

[2] Hippol. *ibid.* i. 2. 99.

[3] Hippol. *ibid.* i. 2. 46 f.

[4] C. Schmidt, in *TU* xliii. 512.

He begins with a general statement. The Law and the prophets had been given to the Jews, philosophy to the Greeks, to fit them for the Gospel. Quoting Isa. xlix. 9, 'Saying to those in bonds, Come forth, and to those that are in darkness, Show yourselves,' he maintains that those in bonds are the Jews, and those in darkness the Gentiles. Faith was lacking in those who were righteous according to the Law; the abandonment of idolatry was required, as well as faith, in those who were righteous according to philosophy. When the truth was revealed, they repented of their previous conduct. One righteous man differs not from another, as righteous, whether he be a Jew or a Greek. If Christ preached the Gospel to men on earth that they might not be condemned unjustly, how is it conceivable that He did not also preach the Gospel to those who had departed before His coming? God being good and the Lord powerful, they save with a righteousness and equality those who turn to them here or elsewhere. Accordingly, those outside the Law, who lived righteously, though they are in Hades and in ward (*φρουρά*), on hearing the voice of the Lord (whether His own or acting through His apostles, who preached in Hades) speedily were converted and believed.[1]

Clement thus argues that, as was insisted on by other writers, Gentiles were as acceptable to God as the Jews; but, as no other had yet done, he applies this argument to those Gentiles who had passed away before Christ's coming.

Turning to the earlier chapter of his *Miscellanies*, we find him saying: 'The *Shepherd*, speaking of those who had fallen asleep, recognizes certain righteous men among Gentiles and Jews, not only before Christ's coming, but before the Law—Abel, Noah, etc.' Then he quotes the passage from the *Shepherd* regarding the Descent (see p. 85, *supra*), without further comment. In this passage, however, the author of the

[1] *Strom.* vi. 6.

Shepherd seems to have had in view only the righteous of the Old Testament.[1]

The argument is now developed in the later chapter. Gentiles being as worthy of God's favour as Jews, therefore 'the Lord preached the Gospel to those in Hades.' Scripture says (and here he quotes the apocryphon cited by Hippolytus): 'Hades saith to Destruction, We have not seen His form, but we have heard His voice,' meaning that not the place heard the voice, but those brought down to Hades, who had abandoned themselves to destruction. These are they who hear the Divine power and voice. Clement here divides the righteous Jews and Pagans in Hades from sinners: 'Who in his senses would charge Providence with injustice and suppose souls of the righteous and those of sinners to be under one condemnation?' Logically, according to Clement's doctrine of punishment on earth or beyond the grave[2] as a salutary discipline or instruction, he might have included sinners as hearers of the Preaching, since even righteous Jews and Pagans had still to repent on hearing it. But at this point he seems to draw the line. He continues, however, as if some one or perhaps his own feeling objected to this exception: 'What then? Do not (the Scriptures) show that the Lord preached the Gospel to those destroyed in the Flood, or rather to those chained, and to those kept in prison and ward?' This is an obvious reference to 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, which speaks of a preaching to sinners, but it is deflected by him to a reference already cited from Isa. xlix. 9, the 'chained' and 'those in prison' being explained as Jews and Gentiles. He considers the point no further, but passes on to the passage already cited from the *Shepherd*, and says, 'The apostles, imitating the Lord, preached the Gospel to those in Hades' (though the *Shepherd* says nothing of such an imitation, making no reference to Christ's Preaching). This imitation

[1] *Strom.* ii. 9.

[2] Cf. *Strom.* vi. 14, vii. 10, 12, 6.

he regards as necessary in Hades just as it was on earth; Christ bringing to repentance those of the Hebrews, the apostles those of the Gentiles—those who lived righteously according to the Law or philosophy, 'who had ended life not perfectly but sinfully.' 'It was fitting to the Divine economy that those having more worth in righteousness and having lived in pre-eminence, on repenting of their errors, and making confession, though in another place, should be saved in the number of the people of God, each according to his own knowledge.' The Saviour drew to salvation those who were willing, by the Preaching, to believe on Him, wherever they were.

The Lord descended to Hades for no other purpose than to preach the Gospel, either to all or to the Jews only. If to all, then all, even Gentiles, who believe shall be saved on making their profession there; for God's punishments are saving and disciplinary, leading to conversion and choosing the repentance rather than the death of a sinner, for souls, though darkened by passions, when released from their bodies, can see more clearly, no longer being obstructed by the flesh.

But if He preached to the Jews only, the apostles there (*i.e.* in Hades), as here, preached the Gospel to those of the Gentiles who were ready for conversion. Then Clement quotes the *Shepherd*: 'They (the apostles) went down with them into the water, and again came up. But these went down alive, and came up again alive, but those who had fallen asleep descended dead, but came up alive.' The Gospel also says that 'many bodies of them that slept arose,' plainly as having been translated to a better state. 'There took place, therefore, a certain universal movement and translation through the dispensation of the Saviour.'

Christ sent the apostles to preach to the men on earth, that no one might be able to say that he had not heard. Does not the same dispensation hold good in Hades, that there all the souls,

on hearing the Preaching, might show repentance, or confess that the punishment was just, due to their unbelief? It would have been very arbitrary that those who preceded the Lord's coming and neither having the Gospel nor any reason for believing or not believing, should partake of salvation or punishment. It would not be right that they should be condemned without a trial, and those who lived after the Advent should enjoy the Divine righteousness. Hence the Gospel was preached to them also who had died before the Advent.[1]

Of all the many references to the Descent in early Christian literature, this of Clement's is surely the most beautiful and reasonable. For it is on reasonable grounds that he argues for the benefit of the Preaching in Hades to righteous Pagans. Logically he might have gone further and extended it to all, on the ground of his belief in punishment as a discipline leading to improvement, mentioned above and elsewhere in his works. For even righteous Jews and Gentiles were sinners, and required repentance through the Preaching—a belief found also in the *Shepherd*, in the Presbyter of Irenæus, and in the *Epistle of the Apostles*, though apparently this is not contemplated by other writers. Others, more sinful, might also have benefited by the Preaching, and there are signs that this was not outside Clement's view, though on the whole he limits the benefit to exemplary Pagans and righteous Jews. We have seen how he glances for a moment at 1 S. Pet. iii. 19. He seems to return to it for a moment towards the end of the chapter where he speaks of all sinful flesh perishing in the Deluge, punishment having been inflicted for correction. Hence the will of God, which is disciplinary and beneficent, saves those who turn to Him. The soul could not receive injury from the water, and whatever is gross because of sin is cast away with the carnal spirit which lusts against the soul. Presumably,

[1] *Strom.* vi. 6.

then, those who perished in the Deluge would be saved ; whether this was effected by the Preaching or not is not made clear.

In his *Adumbrationes* on 1 S. Peter, Clement quotes only part of iii. 18 f., and comments only on that part. '*For Christ died once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, put to death in the flesh but quickened in the spirit.* He says this, referring to their faith ; that is, He is quickened in our spirits. *Coming*, he says, *He preached to them, who formerly were unbelieving.* They did not indeed see His form, but they heard the sound of His voice. *When*, he says, *the long-suffering of God waited.* So God is good, that even by instruction (*eruditionem*) the effect of salvation might be wrought.'[1]

Is Clement here referring to the Preaching in Hades ? The citation of the apocryphon : 'They did not see His form,' etc., quoted in his discussion of the Descent, would make one think so, but the rest of the comment rather suggests that we (cf. 'our spirits'), who formerly disbelieved, have now been brought to believe. By omitting the words which refer to disobedience at the time of the Deluge and to the spirits in prison, Clement is thus able to allegorize the passage. What meaning he would have given to the unmutilated passage cannot be decided from his use of part of it here. The passage iv. 6 is interpreted by him in a similar manner, as we shall see later.

The comment on S. Jude vv. 6, 7 is interesting. The 'darkness' to which the rebellious angels were driven, signifies a place near the earth, the darkened air. '*As Sodom and*

[1] Clement, *Adumbrationes in Ep. catholicas*, in T. Zahn, *Forschungen zur Gesch. des NT Kanons*, Erlangen, 1884, iii. 81. Zahn, p. 95, says that Clement does not here touch on the question of Christ's Preaching in Hades. So C. Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 539 : 'Clement suppresses all historical reminiscences.' K. Gschwind, p. 43, sees here a reference to the Preaching in Hades, because of the apocryphon and the reference to 'instruction,' which he regards as wrought through punishment, as in the reference to the sinners of the Flood cited above.

Gomorrha, he says, to whom the Lord signifies that there is more indulgence and that, being instructed, they repented.' Huidekoper suggests that this is intelligible 'on the supposition alone that its writer referred to Christ's mission in the Underworld, and that he understood the Master's lamentation over the Jewish cities (S. Matt. xi. 23; S. Luke x. 12, 13) as implying a better apprehension of His teaching by Sodom and Gomorrha.' If so, this would imply that Clement thought of the Preaching as having a wider scope than to exemplary Jews and Pagans.[1] The reference to 'being instructed' (*eruditos*) is significant, in view of Clement's theory of *eruditio* or παίδευσις as leading to repentance and belief.

Origen

Origen's hopeful eschatological scheme welcomed the doctrine of the Descent, of which he frequently speaks, citing the Old Testament passages supposed to predict it—Ps. lxviii. 18, lxxvii. 16; Hos. xiii. 14, etc. The most interesting reference is in his second Homily on 1 Samuel where, in discussing the story of the witch of Endor, he argues with those who thought it impossible that Samuel, the patriarchs, and prophets could be in Hades. Here he proves by Christ's Descent that He, being so much greater than they, must have been preceded in Hades by them.

When S. John Baptist was about to die and go to Hades, where he would announce Christ's coming there, he sent to Him, asking, 'Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?' perhaps doubting whether He, so glorious, would descend to Hades and the abyss. Christ descended into those regions (εἰς τὰ χωρία ἐκεῖνα) not as the slave of those there, but as a Lord wrestling (with them). He descended to

[1] *Adumbrationes*, in Zahn, iii. 84; Huidekoper, p. 17. Huidekoper assigns the *Adumbrationes* to an Alexandrine contemporary of Clement or Origen.

save. Now if Moses, the prophets, Samuel, foretold Him on earth, so did they in Hades, as did also S. John Baptist. As 'they that be whole have no need of a physician, but they that be sick,' so there were physicians before Christ, the Chief Physician, descending to the sick, preparing in Hades a people for the Lord. Every place has need of Christ, and if any one needs Christ, he needs also His prophets, preparing the way for Him. Since all descended to Hades before Christ, so the prophets were His forerunners. The souls of those that slept were in need of the prophetic grace, preaching Christ's sojourn in Hades. Before the coming of my Lord Jesus Christ none could pass beyond where the tree of life was, and the appointed guards of the way to it. Neither Samuel nor Abraham, who was seen by Dives in Abraham's Bosom, could pass the flaming sword. Therefore the patriarchs and prophets and all waited the coming of my Lord Jesus Christ, that He might open the way, for 'I am the Way,' 'I am the Door.' The way to the tree of life is, that if thou passest through the fire, the flame may not burn thee.[1]

In his commentary on S. Luke, Origen expounds further this conception of the way to the tree of life in Paradise. There is a fiery river through which all must pass, receiving a baptism of fire. It cannot harm the righteous, but all who are baptized with water and the Spirit, receive that fiery baptism and so pass to Paradise. To this Paradise *in terra*, better than Hades, but not the heavenly Paradise, and guarded by the cherubim with the fiery sword, our Lord transferred those whom He rescued from Hades.[2]

The earth retained all devoured in Hades. Hence our Lord descended, not only to the earth, but to the lower parts of the earth, and there He found us devoured and sitting in

[1] *Hom.* 2 *in* 1 *Reg.*, Migne, *PG* xii. 1023 ff.
[2] *in Luc. Hom.* 24; *ibid.* xii. 1190 f.; *de Prin.* ii. 11. 6.

the shadow of death. Thence He led us forth, not to an earthly place to be again devoured, but He prepared for us a place in the kingdom of Heaven.[1]

Origen speaks of the Descent in his book against Celsus.[2] The Jew, in whose mouth Celsus places his argument, says that the stories of the descent of heroes—Orpheus, Protesilaos, Hercules, Theseus—to Hades and their return are juggling impossibilities, and Christ's Descent is no better. Origen replies that Christ was publicly crucified in the sight of the Jewish people. His Descent to Hades and His Resurrection were not mythical, as those of such heroes: they were facts. In an earlier passage, which also shows that the current doctrine of the Descent was well known to Celsus, the latter ridiculed the idea that Christ went to Hades to persuade those there, when He had failed to persuade men on earth. Origen replies that Christ convinced many on earth, and this was the cause of the plot against Him. Then with His soul disembodied (*γυμνῇ σώματος γενόμενος ψυχῇ*) He held converse with disembodied souls (*ταῖς γυμναῖς σωμάτων ψυχαῖς*), converting to Himself such of them as were willing, or whom He saw, for reasons known to Himself, were more adapted for this.[3]

In his commentary on Romans, Origen speaks of Christ's victory over Death. Christ, of His own will, emptied Himself and took the form of a servant, and suffered the rule of the tyrant, 'being made obedient unto death,' by which death He destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil, that He might free those held by Death. For, binding the strong, and triumphing over him in His Cross, He went into his house, the house of Death, Hades, and plundered his goods, *i.e.* drew forth the souls which he held. This had been set forth in the parable

[1] *in Exod., Hom.* vi. 6.
[2] *contra Celsum,* ii. 56.
[3] *Ibid.* ii. 43.

of binding the strong man. First, He bound him through the Cross, and so entered his house, Hades, and thence ascending on high led captivity captive, those, that is, who rose with Him and entered the Holy City, the Heavenly Jerusalem. Even the saints were held by Death — if not by the law of transgressing, at least by that of Death. Hence Christ descended to Hades, not only that He might not be held by Death, but that He might draw forth those detained there not so much by the fault of transgression as by the circumstance of death. The kingdom of Death is destroyed and the captivity held in it is taken away. But because the tyrant and enemy is yet to be destroyed (1 Cor. xv. 26) in the end of the world, therefore even now we see him not so much reigning as robbing, and, driven from his kingdom, wandering through deserts and byways, seeking the hand of the unbelieving.[1] Christ was so much stronger than Death, that all of those bound by Death could follow Him if they wished to do so. Death could no longer avail against them. Whoever is with Christ is free from being seized by Death.[2] The Saviour arose on the third day, having trodden on Death and spoiled Hades.[3]

For the salvation of the world Christ descended to Hades and thence called forth the first man (*protoplastum*). The words spoken to the thief, 'To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise,' were spoken not to him only, but to all saints also, for whom He descended to Hades.[4]

The statement that S. John Baptist was Christ's forerunner in Hades is repeated elsewhere. 'He died before Him, that descending to Hades he might foretell His coming.' 'To those looking for freedom from death through Christ he came

[1] *in Rom.* v., Migne, *PG* iv. 1019, 1051.
[2] *in Matt.* xvi. 10.
[3] *in Ps.* lxxxviii. 23.
[4] *Hom. xv. in Gen.* 5.

before Christ, and everywhere made ready a people prepared for the Lord.'[1] And S. Paul also, after his death, was still in Hades the apostle of the heathen and Israelites and all other invisible beings.[2]

In several of these passages Origen contemplates a people prepared in Hades for the Lord by the prophets and S. John Baptist. They accept Christ when He comes and are removed to Paradise. They are, in these passages, the people of Israel, not necessarily the saints only. But in his argument against Celsus, a work for pagan readers, probably a wider salvation in Hades is intended—a 'converting' of those who needed this. This is further suggested by his references to 1 S. Pet. iii. 19. God's justice had the purpose of improving the nature of those who suffer for their sins; hence he speaks of 'the hope of those who were destroyed in the Deluge, of which hope Peter himself speaks,' and he cites the passage (iii. 19).[3] Again, in discussing the words of S. Thomas: 'Let us also go and die with Him,' he has in view the Petrine passage. The apostle thought that Christ intended a purpose for souls, which He was about to fulfil by descending to their region (εἰς τὸ χωρίον αὐτῶν), that He might preach to the spirits in prison, going to them who were sometime disobedient.[4] Origen contemplates a preaching to others than the Old Testament saints. There is a further reference to the passage in the curious explanation of the shoe of Christ (S. Mark i. 7). The allegorical meaning of the one shoe is the Incarnation, Christ's Descent to this world; of the other, the Descent to Hades and the sojourning in the prison, the Descent being suggested by Ps. xvi. 10, and the sojourning by 1 S. Pet. iii. 19.[5] Another interesting passage shows that,

[1] *in Luc. Hom.* 4; *in Ev. Joan.* ii. 37.
[2] *in Rom.* vi. 10.
[3] *de Princip.* ii. 5. 3.
[4] *Comm. in Joan.* frag. 79.
[5] *Ibid.* vi. 35. Cf. C. Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 544.

while Origen regarded sinners as shut up in a part of Hades where they could not see the soul of Jesus descending and ascending, yet they who looked for Him saw Him, first the prophets, then all the rest of the righteous, or first the sinners among us, then the Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη).[1]

S. Gregory Thaumaturgos (*ob. c.* 270 A.D.)

Gregory represents Christ as saying at His baptism that it became Him to descend to the depths of Hades on behalf of those detained there, to destroy the power of death, and to kindle the torch of His Body for those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.[2] We shall later see the connexion of ideas between Christ's baptism, baptism in general, and the Descent.

In his 'Homily on All Saints,' anticipating the rhetorical descriptions of the Descent in later writings, he says that if any one supposes that Death is not destroyed and Hades trodden under foot, its chains broken, the tyrant bound, he has only to look at the martyrs disporting themselves in Death's presence, and joining in the joyful strains of Christ's victory. Hades and Satan have been stripped of their armour. The devil cast his hook at the Godhead, supposing himself to be the captor, but he was caught, for in place of the man he has touched the God. Since the second Adam brought the first Adam from the depths of Hades, and to the shame of the deceived deceiver set him forth as a citizen of Heaven, the gates of Hades are closed and the gates of Heaven have been opened to present an unimpeded entrance to those who rise thither in faith.[3]

[1] *Sel. in Ps.* ix. 18.
[2] Greg. *Serm. in Theophania.*
[3] See translation in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library,* xx. 154 f.

S. Athanasius

In an Epistle to Epictetus, Athanasius says that the Body of Christ was laid in the grave, when the Logos had left it, yet was not parted from it, to preach to the spirits in prison as Peter says.[1]

Athanasius uses the Descent of Christ's Soul to Hades as an argument against the Apollinarian denial of a human soul in Christ. The soul of Christ was thought to be that of a mere man by Death, but Christ came with a soul which could not be kept in bonds, in order to burst the bonds of those kept in bonds and to give them freedom.[2]

In his 'Discourses against the Arians,' he cites the creeds of Sirmium, Nike, and Constantinople, and says that before the Lord 'the keepers of the gates of Hades shuddered' (Job xxxviii. 17, LXX), and set open the gates. The graves gaped and many bodies of the saints arose and appeared to their own people. Let no one, therefore, ascribe fear to our Lord, whom Death as a serpent flies from.[3] In another work he refers again to the rising of the saints, and says that the gates of Heaven were lifted up to await Him that cometh from Edom.[4]

Again, he writes that Christ rescued more than the patriarchs and prophets. The soul of Adam, held in the condemnation of death, cried continually to God, and those who had pleased God and had been justified by the law of nature, and were detained with Adam, cried with him, until the mercy of God revealed to them the mystery of redemption.[5]

A doubtful work ascribed to Athanasius, on Christ's Passion, contains the reference to the terror of the janitors of Hades.

[1] *ad Epict.* lix. 5.
[2] *de Incar. cont. Apollin.* i. 13. In ii. 8 he cites 1 S. Pet. iii. 19.
[3] *contra Arianos*, iii. 29. 56.
[4] *in Lucam*, x. 22.
[5] *de Salut. Advent.* 9.

Death was abolished. All were liberated who all life long through fear of death were subject to bondage. Christ destroyed the pains of Hades and aroused those there, saying: 'Arise, let us go hence.' Then the wretched one, cast out of Hades, and sitting at its gates, beheld all those that were bound led forth by the intrepidity of the Saviour, the dead raised, the captives freed, the saints who, with Abraham, were favoured, sounding the timbrels, as it is written in Ps. lxviii. 25. All who were freed rejoiced in the words of Ps. cxxvi. The angels sang 'Gloria in excelsis,' and ran to meet the redeemed souls. On all sides resounded strains of joy.[1]

Eusebius of Cæsarea

In his *Demonstratio Evangelica* Eusebius has interesting notices of the Descent. Love summoned Christ to death and to the dead, that He might summon the souls of those long dead. Caring for the salvation of all for ages past, and in order 'to bring to nought him that hath the power of death,' He did not fear Death, who was lagging as if in fear to come to Him. Rather He drove him on, and bursting the eternal gates of his dark realms, made a way for the dead to return to life. His own Body rose, and many bodies of saints rose and came with Him into the holy city of Heaven. So the prophets represent Him reviling Death and releasing souls (Hos. xiii. 14). The powers arrayed against Christ, as His disembodied soul entered Hades, perhaps at first regarded Him as an ordinary man, but realizing that He was Divine, they fled, so that He laid His hands on them, as it is said: 'Thy hands shall be on the backs of Thy enemies.'

Expounding Ps. xxii. 11 f., he says that none of the angels ventured to enter Hades with Christ in His mission to succour souls. To Him only were the gates of Death opened, the door-

[1] *de Pass. et Cruce Domini*, 25 f., in Migne, *PG* xxviii. 230 f.

keepers of Hades saw and feared Him, and he who has the power of Death, descending from his throne, spoke gently to Him with prayer and supplication. The Psalm is then expounded in the sense that 'the bulls compassing me' represent the invisible powers and demons hovering round Christ on the Cross like voracious birds and wild beasts. 'Most likely they thought that the soul of Jesus was human and like other souls,' and opened their mouths as if to devour it. Christ shattered the gates of brass and broke the iron bonds, and set free the prisoners from Hades. This was done when many bodies of the saints that slept arose and entered with Him into the true holy city of God.[1]

Ephrem Syrus

Ephrem Syrus, the voluminous hymn-writer of the fourth century, is most dramatic in his descriptions of the Descent. Some of his Nisibene Hymns are dialogues between Death, Satan, and Hades. The thirty-fifth Hymn tells how the Voice made proclamation. The hosts of the Evil One gathered and came. They saw that Jesus had triumphed. Sin and Hades were terrified. Death trembled and the dead rebelled. Satan trembled because sinners rebelled against him. Satan tells how he tempted Christ in vain, and how amazed he is at this Man who is God. Gluttonous Death lamented: 'One Man has closed my mouth, mine, who have closed the mouths of many.' The devil says that he is much cheered because while Christ was praying He changed colour and was afraid. 'This is pleasant to me, if He has not deceived me.' Death then counsels him to go into Judas and betray Christ.[2]

In the next Hymn Death says that he has conquered all

[1] Euseb. *Dem. Ev.* iv. 12, viii. 1, x. 8. The explanation of Ps. xxii. closely resembles that of Origen.

[2] Ephrem Syrus, *Hymn* 35, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, xiii. 193.

men save Enoch and Elijah, who are in Paradise. Then the Voice of Christ sounded through Hades and He burst the graves one by one. In Hades, never before lit, there flash splendours from the Watchers (the angels) who enter in and bring out the dead to meet the Lord. Death cries: 'The death of Jesus is a torment to me. While He was living He restored to life three that were dead, but now by His death the dead whom I was about to shut in have come to life. I will haste and close the gates of Hades before this Dead One whose death has spoiled me. A medicine of life has entered into Hades and has restored life to its dead.' . . . 'The Watchers have entered and the dead have gone forth.' Hades now implores Christ and offers Him Adam. 'Go up and reign over all, and when I shall hear Thy trumpet, I with mine own hand shall lead forth the dead at Thy coming.' The Hymn ends with triumph: 'Our King, living, has gone forth and gone up out of Hades as a conqueror. Woe has He doubled to them of the left hand; to evil spirits and to demons He is sorrow, and to Death He is pain, to Sin and Hades mourning.' [1]

Four Hymns follow containing the lamentation of Death and the boasting of Satan. Death weeps for Hades when he sees her treasuries emptied. 'The Son of captivity whom I took captive has taken me captive.' Satan says: 'I fear Jesus lest He destroy my arts.' Then he boasts, but his servants dispute with him and refute him. Elisha brought the dead to life. If he could do this, how many will Jesus bring to life! Satan now comes to rejoice with Death at Christ's being cast into Hades, but he finds Death sorrowful at the voice of the First-born, who lived and came forth from Hades. Hades relates how he has feasted on corpses, but 'Jesus compelled me to disgorge all I had eaten.' Satan bids Death open the gates of Hades to receive Christ. Death obeys and there shone in the

[1] *Hymn* 36, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, xiii. 196.

splendour of the face of the Lord. Like the men of Sodom they are smitten, and groped and sought the gate of Hades which they had lost.[1] Though the order of incidents in these Hymns is not clear, the meaning is followed easily enough.

Other Hymns in this series are dialogues between Satan and Hades,[2] which like those Hymns already cited bear a close resemblance to what is found in Homilies ascribed to Eusebius of Emesa and in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*.

One passage is here significant—the reference to Ezekiel's quickening the bones in the valley when he was questioned (commanded). But now there is a tumult of bones in Sheol, bone seeking for his fellow, and joint for her mate. None was questioned, none questioned whether these bones lived. For unquestioned the Voice of Jesus, the Master of all creatures, quickened them.

In other Hymns Ephrem describes Death holding all in his clutches, while Hades rejoices at his victory, engulfing all alike, of all ages and all generations, sparing neither the innocent nor the holy. Death puts his hand on Christ and places Him in Hades. Christ triumphs and seizes Death, overcoming him in his own kingdom and chaining him in an eternal prison. He seizes and treads under foot Satan. He uproots Hades whose insatiable belly devours all mortals and decomposes all bodies. The demons tremble, the dark depths shake at His voice. The gates of Tartarus are broken ; the walls of the city of delights are shaken. Christ calls Adam, who crouched at the bottom of the dark dungeon, and takes off his chains, restoring him to his first glory.[3]

In an Easter Hymn, Jesus is described as a sojourner with Death for three days. He set at liberty the captives, and laid

[1] *Hymns* 37–41, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, xiii. 198 ff.
[2] *Hymns* 52 ff.
[3] *Necrosima* 29, in Ephrem, *Opera*, Rome, 1743, vi, 28.

waste Death's encampment, and restored the spoils. Death had hitherto boasted of his universal power, but a mighty One came without warning against him and spoiled his glory. The dead perceived a sweet savour of life in the midst of Hades, and spread the glad tidings that their hope was fulfilled. Christ proclaimed that they were set at liberty from their bondage.[1]

In some of his Homilies Ephrem pursues the same theme, *e.g.* in one for Easter Eve Christ cries: 'I descended alone to Hades, but with thousands and myriads I ascended. For three days I searched through the riches and treasures of Hades. I sought and found Adam. I descended and carried forth our image: I bore forth from voracious Hades Adam, the head of the human race. Adam called to Me in his grief, and from the cavern of Death called to Me that I should draw him from his miseries and restore to him My friendship. I, who am merciful, heard his voice. I descended and liberated him, and to-day his salvation is sure.'[2]

In another Homily he speaks of Jesus going to Hades as Jacob went to Haran, and like him going out thence. Jacob went alone to Haran carrying his staff, but went thence with spoils and a great train of servants. So Jesus Himself alone carrying the sign of the Cross, the staff by which He reigns over all, went straight through Hades, the true Haran. But when He came forth in the Resurrection, the dead rose with Him from the dust, and He roused those who slept in the tomb from of old.[3]

Again, Christ departed from Sheol and took up His abode in the Kingdom, that He might seek out a path from Sheol to the Kingdom. He descended to Sheol and ascended, that

[1] H. Burgess, *Select Metrical Hymns and Homilies of Ephrem Syrus*, London, 1853, p. 77.

[2] Ephrem Syrus, *Hymni et Sermones*, ed. J. Lamy, Malines, 1882, i. 548.

[3] Ephrem, ed. Lamy, i. 514.

from the place which corrupts its sojourners, He might bring us to the place which nourishes its dwellers with blessings. He was trampled on by Death, but in His turn He trod out a way over Death. He was subject to Death of His own will, that He might cast down Death against its will. He bore His Cross, and went forth according to the will of Death, but He cried on the Cross and brought forth the dead from Sheol against the will of Death (S. Matt. xxvii. 52). He entered Sheol and plundered its storehouses and emptied its treasures. He came to Eve, the mother of all living. The Medicine of Life flew down from Heaven, and was mingled in the Body, the mortal fruit. Death could not feed on Him after its custom, and the Life in turn swallowed up Death. By one fruit, which Death swallowed hungrily, he vomited up many lives which he had swallowed greedily. Christ made His Cross a bridge over Sheol that swallows all, and brought mankind into the dwelling of life. As through the tree mankind fell into Sheol, so on the Tree they passed to the dwelling of life. Through the tree by which bitterness was tasted, through it sweetness was tasted. 'Glory to Thee who didst lay Thy Cross as a bridge over death, that souls might pass over on it from the dwelling of the dead to the dwelling of life.' [1]

The references to Adam and Eve in Sheol have parallels in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and elsewhere; and in the introduction to one of the Hymns the words occur: 'To Thee be glory who didst descend and plunge after Adam, and drew him out of the depths of Sheol and brought him into Eden.' [2]

Aphraates (*c.* 343–344 A.D.)

The Syriac Homilist, Aphraates, a contemporary of Ephrem Syrus, devotes a long section of one of his Homilies to the

[1] *Hom. on our Lord*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, xiii. 305.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 216.

Descent, the phrases of which have a close resemblance to those of Ephrem. 'As Jesus, the Death of Death, came and took a Body, and in His Body was crucified and tasted death, and as Death perceived that He came down to him, he staggered forth from his abode as he saw Him, and shut his doors and would not receive Him. Christ burst his doors and entered to him, and began to spoil his whole possession.[1] But as the dead saw the light in the darkness, they raised their heads out of the captivity of Death, and looked out and saw the brightness of Christ the King. Then the powers of his darkness sat in sadness because Death was overthrown from his dominion. And Death tasted the medicine which put him to death, and his hands grew slack, and he knew that the dead would live and be freed from his rule. And as Christ afflicted Death through the spoiling of his possessions, he moaned and cried bitterly: "Who is He who dares enter living into my dwelling?" And then Death cried aloud when he saw that his darkness began to decline, and some of the righteous who slept there stood up in order to ascend with Christ. Then Christ proclaimed to Death that when He came at the end of time He would free all the prisoners out of his rule and draw them to Himself, so that they would see the Light. Death then let Jesus, after He had accomplished His work among the dead, vanish out of his dwelling-place, and suffered Him not to remain there. For it was not sweet to him to swallow Him as he swallowed all the dead. He had no power over the saints, and these were not given up to corruption.' 'To Death is now left as poison the promise of life, that in course of time his rule will be brought to nought. As a man vomits food in which is poison, but the poison leaves its effects in his members, and in time he dies, so is the dead Jesus the

[1] Cf. Ephrem Syrus, *Hymn for Epiph.* (*Nic. and Post-Nicene Fathers*, p. 268): 'He on His feet entered Sheol and spoiled it and came forth.'

annihilator of Death, Jesus through Whom life reigns and death is done away, to whom it is said: "O Death, where is thy victory?"'[1]

This passage is prefaced by the statement that Enoch and Elijah did not die, and citing 1 Sam. ii. 6, Deut. xxxii. 39, and Isa. xxvi. 19, it says: 'As Death heard all these, amazement took him and he sat in grief.'

There are many echoes of the *Odes of Solomon* in this interesting account of the Descent—the terror of Death, the breaking of the doors, the bitterness of the poison which Death tastes ('gall and bitterness,' *Ode* xlii.), Death unable to swallow Jesus as his food (*Ode* xxiv.), the destroying of darkness (*Ode* xxxi.), and the release of the saints.

Prudentius

Prudentius, the Western hymn-writer, describes the Descent in somewhat turgid language in his *Hymn for All Hours*. Christ entered Tartarus, in order that His salvation might be known. The gates and bolts were shattered and loosened. Christ illumined the caves of Death with golden light, bringing dazzling day to the realms of darkness. The serpent lost his poison, and dropped his hissing neck. The fathers and many saints rise on the third day and come forth from the graves and assume the garments of flesh. They follow Christ, who leads the way, and ascends as Victor to the tribunal of the Father, carrying back the glory of His Passion to Heaven.[2]

Prudentius here apparently adopts the interpretation of the 'holy city' in S. Matt. xxvii. 53 as the heavenly Jerusalem.

[1] G. Bert, *Aphraat's Des Persischen Weisen Homilien, TU* iii. 3 and 4, p. 351 f.

[2] *Cathæmerinon*, ix., in Migne, *PL* lix. 870.

Synesius

Another hymn-writer, Synesius, bishop of Ptolemais, may be cited here. He is full of reminiscences of the pagan creed which he had abandoned. Addressing Christ he says: 'Thou didst go down to Tartarus where Death held in thrall the innumerable tribes of souls. Old Hades trembled in fear of Thee, and the devouring dog fell back from the gate. Then didst Thou, releasing righteous souls from pain, offer strains of thanksgiving to the Father. As Thou didst ascend on high, the demons and powers of the air were afraid. Æther, parent of Harmony, sang a hymn of praise to his seven-stringed lyre.' Christ, issuing from Hades, is smiled on by the planet Venus. Before Him goes the horned moon, leading the gods of night. Beneath His feet Titan spreads his flowing locks of light, recognizing in the Son of God the source of his own fires.[1] Here, perhaps, the poet's thought has been influenced by the Egyptian conception of the triumphal daily emergence of the sun from the darkness of Amentè, through which it has passed all night.

Firmicus Maternus

Firmicus Maternus has a rhetorical passage on the Descent in his *de Errore Profanarum Religionum*. 'Christ has shut the gates of Hell's kingdom and broken the yoke of the hard law by trampling on Death. In three days He has gathered the throng of the righteous, so that Death should no longer bear harmful rule over them. He has devastated the eternal prison-house, lest the merit of the just should fall through long-continued despair.[2] The iron doors have fallen at His com-

[1] Synesius, *Hymn* ix.

[2] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 7, Lat. A, 'this Jesus putteth to flight by the brightness of His Majesty the darkness of death, and hath broken the strong depths of the prisons and let out the prisoners.'

mand. Look how the earth trembled. Its very foundations shook at the presence of Christ's Godhead. The sun sank in night before its daily course was over. Darkness hid the world. All the elements raged as Christ fought against Death's tyranny. For three days the battle lasted, till Death's forces of evil were broken and routed.[1] . . . Look, after three days a brighter day than any before it dawns. With beams of increased splendour the sun pays homage to Christ, the Mighty God.[2] The Godhead triumphs, bringing salvation. The host of the just and the saints escorts His chariot of victory. Then with exalted joy exalted mortality cries : O Death, where is thy sting ?[3] Running before the Saviour, it commands the heavenly gates to be opened to Him. Christ, having trampled on death, recalls to Heaven the Manhood which He had assumed. This was foretold by a holy prophet, and from the prophetic mouth the voice of rejoicing is heard : " Lift up your gates, ye princes, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting gates, and the King of Glory shall come in ! "[4] This is commanded to the angels, who know nothing of it, for they could not know when the Word of God descended to earth. Hence they inquire : " Who is this King of Glory ? "[5] To whom Christ, with clear majesty of His Godhead, replies : " The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." The custodians of the gates know that it is the Son of God, and become aware of what they were ignorant of before. They see the spoils of the conquered enemy, and they, too, with those ascending, reiterate the cry : " Lift up your gates, ye who are before them, and be lifted up, ye eternal gates, and the King of Glory will come in." ' The passage ends with Christ's triumphal entry along with the ransomed host.

[1] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 6 (Greek and Latin).
[2] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 2 (Greek and Latin).
[3] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 5 (Greek and Latin), where Isaiah cites these words.
[4] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 5 (Greek and Latin).
[5] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 5 (Greek and Latin).

S. Ambrose

In his treatise *de Fide* Ambrose says that though Christ was made Man, yet He was also made free among the dead. He was free because the bonds of death had no hold on Him. He was not made a prisoner by the powers of darkness, but He exerted power over them. Then he quotes 1 S. Pet. iii. 19 and Acts ii. 24. The 'substance' of Christ was present in the Underworld. Then He exerted His power in the soul to set free the souls of the dead, to loose the bonds of death, to remit sins. By the token of His Resurrection He loosed the bonds of Hades and raised the souls of the righteous. The angels were spell-bound at His victory; the heavenly hosts doubted.[1] For a conqueror came adorned with wonderful spoils. Before Him went angels and archangels, marvelling at the prey wrested from death. Beholding the trophy of the Cross whereof the government was upon His shoulder, and the spoils borne by the everlasting Conqueror, the angels seeing His approach bade their princes lift up their gates: 'Lift up your gates, etc.' But some of them still stood amazed and asked: 'Who is this King of Glory?' The others said: 'It is the Lord strong and mighty, etc.' Then the multitude of angels in chorus cried: 'Lift up your heads, etc.' Back came the challenge of the astonished angels: 'Who is this King of Glory? for we saw Him with no form or comeliness.' The answer is again flung back: 'The Lord of hosts, etc.'[2]

Where the verses of Ps. xxiv. are quoted in connexion with the Descent, they are usually the order flung forth by the angels at the gates of Hades, while Hades or his hosts ask, 'Who is this King of Glory?' Here, and in the passage of Firmicus Maternus already cited, they are made to refer to the gates of Heaven.

[1] Cf. the similar assertion in Firmicus Maternus, p. 119, *supra*.
[2] *de Fide*, iii. 4. 27, 28, and 14. 111, and iv. i. 1 f.

In his *Commentary on Ephesians*, Ambrose says that Christ spoiled Hades (*inferos*) when He bore away the captives agreeing with Him, who were held there because of Adam's transgression or their own sin, and ascending thence led them to Heaven (*ad cœlos*). Many of them, rising in their bodies, appeared to many who knew that they had died recently, as a proof of the conquest of Death and of Christ's Resurrection. Christ, having triumphed over the devil, descended into the heart of the earth, that His presence there might be a Preaching to the dead, and that as many as were desirous of Him might be set free.[1]

Commenting on Rom. x. 6, he says: 'Having spoiled Hades by the power of the Father, and rising after having conquered Death, He ascended to Heaven with the souls snatched away. For every one whosoever, having seen the Saviour in Hades, hoped for salvation from Him, was set free, Peter testifying to this' (1 S. Pet. iv. 6).[2]

'Christ, not sharing in sin, descending to the depths of Tartarus, breaking the bolts of Hades (*inferni*), recalled to life from the jaws of the devil souls conquered by sin, having destroyed the dominion of Death. The Divine triumph is written in eternal letters when it is said: "O Death, where is thy sting? O Death, where is thy victory?"'[3]

'The Cross of Christ restored Paradise to us. This is the tree which the Lord showed to Adam, saying of the tree of life that he might eat of it, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that he must not eat of it.'[4] Ambrose refers also to the tradition of Adam's burial on Golgotha. So by His Cross (on Golgotha) Christ raised him that was dead. Where in

[1] *in Epist. ad Ephes.* c. 4 (Migne, *PL* xv. 2. 408).
[2] *in Epist. ad Rom.* c. 10 (Migne, xv. 2. 150).
[3] *de Myst. Pasch.* ii. ser. 35, c. 4.
[4] *Enar. in Ps. xxxv.*, § 3.

Adam there was the death of all, in Christ was the resurrection of all.[1]

S. Augustine

In order to understand S. Augustine's views regarding the Descent and its results, we must bear in mind that he was puzzled regarding the nature of the Underworld or Hades. He could not discover that the word *Inferus* was used in Scripture in any good sense.[2] Yet in one passage of his *City of God* he regards it as not absurd to believe that it was the abode of good and bad before Christ's Descent, though separate from each other: 'If it does not seem absurd to believe that the ancient saints who believed in Christ and His then future coming, were kept in places far removed from the torments of the wicked, but yet *apud inferos*, until Christ's Blood and His Descent into these places delivered them.'[3] Augustine speculates much regarding the situation of Paradise, and whether Christ, in saying, 'To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise,' was speaking as God or Man. If as God, then He is present everywhere with the blessed, wherever they are. Hence Paradise might be in Heaven. If as Man, then Paradise is no part of Heaven, since the soul of Christ went *ad inferos*. Paradise is therefore in that place to which Christ descended to deliver those who were to be delivered. There He visited not only those in the penal part, but those in Paradise or Abraham's Bosom.[4] In other writings a different opinion is found.

Thus in his work on *Genesis* he says that the soul of Christ came to those places in which *sinners* are tormented, and loosed from torments those whom He, by a justice hidden from us,

[1] *Epist.* v. 19.

[2] *de Gen. ad Litteram*, xii. 33; *Ep. ad Dardanum*, clxxxvii. 6; *ad Evodium*, clxiv. 7.

[3] *de Civ. Dei*, xx. 15.

[4] *Ep. ad Dardanum*, clxxxvii.

judged fit to be loosed. He did not disdain to visit those places in order to loose those whom He could not be ignorant, according to His Divine and secret justice, were to be loosed.[1] In 414 A.D. he wrote to Evodius, who had inquired of him about 1 S. Pet. iii. 19. His question shows that it was commonly believed that this passage referred to the Descent, that Christ had preached to all, and that Hades had been completely emptied as a result of Christ's presence there. Augustine confesses to great perplexity about this passage. Why were the men of Noah's time counted worthy of favour? or, if Christ preached to all, why are they alone mentioned? Christ descended *ad inferos* (cf. Ps. xvi. 10, Acts ii. 24, 27), and none but an infidel will deny this. Gladly would he admit that all were rescued, but what authority is there for this? He would like to think that noble and worthy Pagans were rescued, but the verdict of human feeling differs from that of Divine justice. Augustine's predestinarian theories blocked the way to such a belief.

All agree that Adam was rescued,[2] as Wisd. x. 1 f. shows: 'Wisdom guarded to the end the first-formed father of the world . . . and delivered him out of his transgression.' Some also add Abel, Seth, Noah, Abraham, and other patriarchs and prophets, and that the Lord loosed them from pains. Yet how could Abraham be loosed from pains, in whose bosom the beggar was received? Augustine cannot understand what benefit was conferred on those in Abraham's Bosom. The word *inferos* is never used in a good sense in Scripture, and Abraham's Bosom is no integral part of that region. Christ, however, went *ad inferos* to save from its pains either all or

[1] *de Gen. ad Litteram*, xii. 33, 34.

[2] Cf. *Opus imperf. contra Julianum* (ed. Migne, *PL* x. 1523). Adam was rescued because he believed in the coming of the Lord, and being, according to the flesh, the first father of Christ, he could not remain in bonds and perish in eternal pains.

those worthy of this favour. Augustine cannot answer whether all or some only were saved.

There are obvious difficulties in the passage of S. Peter and also in the further passage (iv. 6). Some say that all *ad inferos* had never before heard the Gospel; hence that place was emptied of them. Afterwards men who despised the Gospel would be inexcusable. But then what of those who died after the Resurrection and before the widespread preaching of the Gospel? They, too, may have heard it *ad inferos*, because the memory of Christ's Descent might have survived there.[1] But this involves a contradiction, for we mourn over those who depart out of grace and we are anxious that men should accept Christ before death.

S. Augustine thus accepts the Descent. Whether Christ saved 'all whom He found there, or certain whom He judged worthy of that benefit, I still inquire.' Who those were whom He judged worthy it were temerarious to define.

His interpretation of the Petrine passages is that there is no reference in them to a preaching in Hades, but to a time typical of the present. The spirits in prison may have been souls still in bodies, shut up in the darkness of ignorance. Christ had not come in the flesh in Noah's day, but He had often come in the spirit to rebuke or to comfort. The 'quickened spirit' was that in which He preached. The passage about preaching to the dead (iv. 6) need not refer to a preaching in Hades, but to the spiritually dead. These interpretations were generally followed by medieval theologians, though their plain meaning is evaded.

[1] The idea that a knowledge of Christ has remained in the realm of the dead ever since His preaching there has been widely adopted in Lutheran theology. See F. Loofs, 'Descent to Hades (Christ's),' in *ERE* iv. 658.

S. Jerome

In the words of Daniel regarding one like a son of man seen in the fiery furnace, Jerome saw a type of Christ, who descended to the furnace of Hades where souls of the righteous and of sinners were imprisoned, and without burning or injury, liberated from the bonds of death those who were held prisoners.[1] He also speaks of the land of death being plundered and devastated, when by Christ's death the souls bound there were set free.[2] Our Saviour descended that the souls of the saints held in bonds in Hades might be led by the heavenly Victor *ad cœlos*. Wherefore after His Resurrection many bodies of the saints that slept arose and were seen in the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, not the earthly Jerusalem—an interpretation favoured by Origen, Eusebius, Rufinus, and others. The Descent to the lowest parts of the earth and the Ascent to Heaven were the fulfilling, not only of the law and the prophets, but of other hidden dispensations which Christ alone with the Father knew. For we cannot know how the Blood of Christ profited both the angels and those in *inferno*, and yet that it did profit them we cannot be ignorant.[3] After the Lord rose, those who by the sin of Adam or, as some hold, who were grown up in error, and were held in the bonds of death, rose with Him and appeared in the holy city.[4] The strong one, whose house is this world, lying in the evil one (1 S. John v. 19) and whose spoils we were, is bound and held fast in Tartarus, and bruised by the foot of the Lord. The seats of the tyrant being broken up, captivity is led captive.[5] There are many similar passing references to the Descent in Jerome's writings.

[1] *in Dan.* lib. i. c. 3. Cf. *Ep.* 25, where the division of Hades into a place of refreshment and a place of punishment is accepted. Christ had not yet opened the gates of Paradise and quenched the fiery sword with His Blood.

[2] *in Osee*, xiii. 13.

[3] *in Ephes.* lib. ii. c. 4.

[4] *in Zach.* i. 9.

[5] *in Matt.* xii. 29.

S. Hilary of Poitiers

S. Hilary lays stress on our Lord's subjecting Himself to the law of death, fulfilling the nature of man, His soul descending *ad inferos*, as all souls do, and thus not refusing all that was necessary for the consummation of a perfect Man—a doctrine found in earlier Latin Fathers.[1] He refers several times to 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, and speaks of the preaching to those who were disobedient in Noah's day, the prison being that of Hades.[2] But he also speaks of the saints not being held in Hades when Christ descended thither.[3] Commenting on S. Matt. xxvii. 52, he says: 'Enlightening the darkness of death, and illumining the obscurity of Hades, He drew away the spoils of death, by the resurrection of the saints who were then seen.'[4]

In a hymn which recalls some of the phrases of the earlier hymn-writers already cited, Hilary speaks of Christ's conquest of Death and of Hades. The glowing lake was cooled. Phlegethon burned no longer. Light shone through the vast night. Hades and the harsh warders of deep Tartarus trembled. Death was destroyed by its own law. It did not lay hold of a corruptible body; corruption had no law over it.[5]

S. Cyril of Jerusalem

In his *Catechetical Lectures* S. Cyril discusses the Descent as an integral part of Christian doctrine, and in a somewhat rhetorical manner. Christ was laid in a tomb of rock, but the rocks burst asunder through fear of Him. He descended to the regions beneath the earth, that thence He might redeem the righteous. The living, most of whom are unrighteous,

[1] *Enar. in Ps. liii.*, and *in Ps. cxxxviii.*
[2] *Enar. in Ps. cxviii.*, and *in Ps. cxlii.*
[3] *Enar. in Ps. lix.*
[4] *in Matth. Canon.* 33.
[5] A. J. Mason, 'The First Latin Christian Poet,' *JTS* v. 417.

now receive His grace. 'Wouldst thou not wish those who from the time of Adam had been long imprisoned, to have now obtained deliverance? Wouldst thou not wish Him to go down and redeem His herald Isaiah? David, Samuel, and the prophets are there, S. John Baptist who said by his messengers: "Art Thou He that should come?" Wouldst thou not wish that He should descend and redeem them also?' Our Lord descended into Hades alone, but ascended thence with a great company (*πολλοστοῦ δὲ ἀναβάντος*).[1] He went down to death, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose through him. Death was struck with dismay at beholding a new Visitant descend into Hades not bound by its chains. 'Wherefore, O ye porters of Hades, were ye afraid when ye saw Him? What was the unusual fear which struck you? Death fled, and his flight betrayed his cowardice. The prophets ran to Him, with Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Samuel, Isaiah, and John the Baptist. All the righteous whom Death had swallowed were ransomed, for it was fitting that the King whom they had heralded should become the redeemer of His noble heralds. Then each of the righteous said: "O Death, where is Thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?"'[2]

In the same work Cyril refers to our Lord's promise to the thief. 'He who formerly on this holy Golgotha opened Paradise to the robber.' 'Fear not the flaming sword: it shrinks from its Lord. The faithful Abraham had not yet entered Paradise, but the robber enters.' When Christ arrived at the subterranean place, on that very day the soul of the robber entered Paradise.[3]

Cyril also mentions Jonah in the whale as a type of the Descent, and refers to Isa. lxiii. 11, 'He that brought them

[1] See Additional Notes.
[2] *Catech. Lect.* iv. 11, xiv. 18, 19.
[3] *Ibid.* i. 1, xiii. 30, 31.

up out of the sea with the shepherds of his sheep,' and to Heb. xiii. 20, 'God . . . that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd,' and says that 'great' is added, because Christ is on a different level from the shepherds who preceded Him.[1] He also says that Christ's Body was made a bait to Death, that the dragon, lying in wait to devour Him, might cast forth those already devoured.[2]

S. Cyril of Alexandria

S. Cyril frequently refers to the Descent in his series of Paschal Homilies, from which we select the following typical passages :

'Having spoiled all Hades and opened the gates from which the spirits of them that slept could not escape, He rose, leaving the devil desolate and alone there, and loosed the pains of death.' 'He despoiled Hades of spirits.'[3]

'For after He descended to Hades, and preached to the spirits there, opening the gates for ever closed to those dwelling there, and emptying the insatiable recesses of death, He rose on the third day.'[4]

'It was not possible for Him to be held by death, as S. Peter says, but penetrating the lowest parts of Hades, He preached to the spirits there, and led forth those who were bound.'[5]

'He went and preached to the spirits in Hades, who once were unbelieving, as S. Peter says . . . to those who were in bonds, Go forth, and to them that were in darkness, Show yourselves.'[6]

In discussing whether the Divinity of Christ united to His soul descended to Hades, he cites 1 S. Pet. iii. 19; and tells how Christ said to the spirits in bonds, Go forth, and to those

[1] *Catech. Lect.* xiv. 19.
[2] *Ibid.* xii. 15.
[3] *Hom. Pasch.* vii. and vi.
[4] *Ibid.* xi.
[5] *Ibid.* xx.
[6] *Ibid.* iii., quoting Isa. xlix. 9.

in darkness, Show yourselves, quoting here, as in the previous passage, Isa. xlix. 9. He also adds that our Lord, having spoiled Death and Hades, rose on the third day with a multitude of spirits who were detained in the Underworld, and whom He set free.[1]

Venantius Fortunatus

As a final example of poetic reference to the Descent we cite the poem on Easter by Venantius Fortunatus. Christ rose in triumph after His Descent to gloomy Tartarus, crushing the laws of Hades and conquering it. He is addressed by the poet: 'Set free the chained shades of the infernal prison; recall whatever sinks to the depths. Tartarus is vanquished and cannot retain its possessions. The ruler of the Under world, opening his jaws, becomes Thy prey, though he was ever the spoiler. Thou didst rescue a countless host from Death's prison, and they follow their Leader whither He goeth. The monster in terror vomits the multitude whom he had swallowed, and the Lamb withdraws the flock from the jaws of the wolf. Then seeking again the grave and having resumed Thy flesh, Thou didst carry back to the Heavens Thy trophies like a triumphant soldier.' [2]

Acts of Martyrs

References to the Descent occur in some of the Acts of Martyrs, and of these two are worth citing. The first, the *Acts of Xantippe and Polyxena*, though a religious fiction of *c.* 250 A.D., is the more interesting as a testimony to the popular belief. S. Paul says to Xantippe that Christ 'has not only called to mind those upon earth, but by His own presence has redeemed

[1] *de Recta Fide*, in *Opera*, Lutetia, 1638, v. 2. 173; *de Incarnatione*, *ibid.* v. 1. 693.

[2] Venantius Fortunatus, in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, xxii. 223.

those in Hades.' Xantippe also prays to 'God giving light in Hades and guiding those in darkness.' [1]

The second is the *Acts of Callistratus*, c. 300–350 A.D. Callistratus says that Christ preached beforehand the destruction of Hell. At the same hour in which Adam went forth from the garden, in the same hour Christ gave the robber entrance to the garden (Paradise). Christ went down into Hades alone, but went forth thence with a great multitude. He loosed them that were bound by Satan, but him He bound in darkness with bonds that never shall be loosed, and He brought to light the treasures of darkness.' The same *Acts* speak of Christ veiling His Godhead in His Descent, robbing Hades and liberating the spirits in prison (1 S. Pet. iii. 19). He gives them over to the Father, and sets them in a dwelling-place below the firmament out of reach of the evil powers of the air.[2]

Mr. Conybeare traces here the influence of the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. The main point of contact is that of the robber going to the Earthly Paradise (*Nicod.* c. 10). The reference to the solitary Descent and the return with a great multitude occurs in the *Teaching of Addai* and other writings.[3] The reference to the hour of Adam's ejection from Paradise as that in which the robber was led there, occurs in one of the Homilies ascribed to Eusebius of Emesa.[4] Both may be quoting from a common tradition.

[1] *TS* ii. 3. 43 f., and *Ante-Nicene Christian Library* (additional volume), Edinburgh, 1897, p. 204 f.

[2] F. C. Conybeare, *The Apology and Acts of Apollonius and other Monuments of Early Christianity*, London, 1894, p. 309.

[3] See p. 140.

[4] See p. 180.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DESCENT IN APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS

In many of the Christian Apocryphal writings, which had a large circulation, and the contents of which often suggest popular, if not Gnostic, rather than orthodox beliefs, the Descent has a prominent place. This points to the wide acceptance of the doctrine, while the resemblance of several passages in those writings to the Descent story in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* shows how naturally such an imaginative work came into existence. Varying dates are assigned by critics to these Apocryphal writings, and the citations from them can be put only in an approximate chronological order.

The Odes of Solomon

If the date assigned by some critics to the *Odes of Solomon* is correct, *i.e.* the end of the first century, these beautiful hymns form the earliest witness to the Descent outside the New Testament. Other critics maintain that they were not written until the second half of the second century and near its close.[1] Even so, the fullness of the references and their dramatic descriptions are significant, and show great familiarity with an already detailed account of the subject. Besides occasional references, which prove that the author had great interest in the Descent, some of the *Odes* deal specially with it.

In *Ode* xvii. Christ says : ' All who saw Me were amazed : I

[1] R. Harris and A. Mingana, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, Manchester, 1920 ; *The Odes of Solomon*, ed. by J. H. Bernard, in *TS* vol. viii. 1912.

appeared to them as a stranger.' 'He gave Me the way of His goings. I opened the closed doors. I broke in pieces the bars of iron.[1] My own iron melted and dissolved before Me. Nothing appeared closed to Me, for I was the Door to everything. I went to all My bondsmen[2] to loose them, that I might not leave any one bound or binding.' Then He speaks of imparting knowledge to them, sowing fruit in their hearts. 'They received My blessing and lived. They gathered themselves to Me and were saved.'[3]

This *Ode* certainly suggests the Descent, and may be quoted by Ignatius, which would establish the earlier date.[4]

Ode xxii. represents Christ speaking of God who brings Him down from on high and up from the regions below, gathers the things that are between and throws them to Him; scatters His enemies, gives Him authority over bonds to loose them, overthrows by His hands the seven-headed dragon and sets Him at its roots to destroy its seed. 'Thy right hand has destroyed his wicked poison, and Thy hand has levelled the way for those who believe in Thee.' Those who believe in Him, God's hand chose from the graves, separated them from the dead, took dead bones and clad them with bodies.[5]

Ode xlii. is very definite in its account of the Descent, based on Ps. lxxxviii. Christ says: 'Sheol saw Me and was in distress: Death cast Me up and many along with Me.[6] I have

[1] Cf. Isa. xlv. 2 (Sept.), *μοχλοὺς σιδηροῦς συγκλάσω*, the sources of references to breaking the gates and bars of Hades, of which the above is the earliest.

[2] 'bondsmen' (prisoners); cf. 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, 'spirits in prison.'

[3] See Additional Notes, 2.

[4] Ignatius, *ad Phil.* 8, 9: 'He will loose you from every bond,' 'He is the Door of the Father.'

[5] See Additional Notes, 3. 'Took dead bones,' this is based on Ezek. xxxvii. 8, 12, cf. Ephrem Syrus, p. 113, *supra*.

[6] Cf. *Ode* xxxiii. 2: 'He destroyed perdition from before Him, and spoiled all its belongings.' With this cf. the passage from Aphraates, p. 116, *supra*, about Christ spoiling Death's possessions.

been gall and bitterness to it, and I went down with it to the extreme of its depth. And the feet (? the saints) and the head (? Christ) it let go, for it was not able to endure My face. And I made a congregation of living men among his dead ones, and I spoke with them with living lips, in order that My word may not be void. And those who had died ran towards Me, and they cried, Son of God, have pity on us . . . bring us out from the bonds of darkness, and open to us the door by which we shall come out to Thee, for we perceive that our death does not touch Thee. . . . And I heard their voice, and I laid up faith in My heart, and I set My name upon their heads. For they are free men, and they are Mine.' [1]

The subject of *Ode* xxiv. is apparently the baptism of Christ and the terror which it inspired in the Underworld. The phrases used are typical of those used elsewhere of the Descent. 'The abysses were opened and closed; their inhabitants were afraid'; 'the Lord was not given to them for food, because He did not belong to them.' The symbolism is that found elsewhere of Hades, Satan, etc., as devouring monsters.

There are references to the Descent in *Ode* xxxi.: 'The abysses were dissolved before the Lord and darkness was destroyed by His appearance'—an early example of the beliefs in the destruction of Hades and the bright light caused by Christ's Descent. The words spoken by Christ invite the souls in Hades to come forth: 'Come forth, ye that have been afflicted and receive joy, and possess your souls by His grace, and take to you immortal life.'

Dr. Bernard has shown the close connexion in early Christian thought between the Baptism of Christ and Christian Baptism in general and the Descent to Hades. This is found also in some of these *Odes*. The starting-point is the word 'abyss'—the underwaters and so the underworld to which

[1] See Additional Notes, 4.

Christ descended (Rom. x. 7). The waters were terrified at Christ's coming to be baptized in them, and their indwelling demons fled. Baptism was a release from bondage and a restoration to Paradise. Dr. Bernard cites many passages from early Christian literature showing the parallel established between Baptism and the Descent, and refers to the custom of baptizing on Easter Eve as connected with that parallel.[1]

The Gospel of Peter

The surviving fragment of this Gospel, which is Docetic, if not actually Gnostic, and the date of which is not later than 150 A.D., and possibly as early as *c.* 110 A.D., contains an interesting passage on the Descent. In the night, towards dawn, two men are seen descending from Heaven, shining with a great light and entering the sepulchre. From it they come out sustaining a third. A Cross follows them. The heads of the two men reach to Heaven; that of the third overpasses it. The soldiers and elders who are keeping watch hear a voice from Heaven saying: 'Hast Thou preached to them that slept?' A voice was heard from the Cross answering, 'Yea.'[2]

As in Gnostic writings, the Cross is here a kind of *Doppelgänger* of Christ, perhaps symbolizing His soul, not yet reunited to His body.[3] Earlier in the fragment of this Gospel, Christ on the Cross cries: 'My Power, My Power, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Zahn suggests that Christ is supported by the two men because His Power, which He lost in dying, is not yet with Him. The two men may be Michael and Gabriel, or Moses and Elias. The great stature of Christ is a Docetic

[1] Bernard, pp. 32 ff., and in *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, i. 289 ff.

[2] *Gospel of Peter*, vv. 35 ff.

[3] See my paper, 'The Gnostic Conception of the Cross,' in *Journal of Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, 1918. Resch suggests that there may be here a suggestion from the account of Simon's carrying the Cross after Jesus, S. Luke xxiii. 26 (*Aussercanon. Paralleltexte*, in *TU* x. 378).

feature, just as is His change of form in the *Apocryphal Acts*; and in a fragment of Leucius Charinus, preserved by Photius, Christ is said to have appeared now young, now old; now small, now large, so large that His head reached to Heaven.[1] The form of the words, like that in 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, points to an early tradition of the Preaching in Hades. The passage contains one word found in that Epistle, 'preached'; and also the phrase in S. Matt. xxvii. 52, 'them that slept.' The passage may be a reminiscence of the apocryphon cited by Justin and Irenæus.[2] If this Gospel is Gnostic, 'them that slept' might merely refer to souls on earth, the Christian tradition of the Descent being thus modified in accordance with Gnostic views.

The Epistle of the Apostles

The editor of this apocryphal work, surviving in Coptic and Ethiopic versions, claims a date for it *c.* 160 A.D., and its place of origin as Asia Minor. If so, its account of the Descent is a valuable witness to the belief in the second century. Christ says: 'To those that loved Me and kept My commandments, will I give rest and life in the kingdom of My Father. . . . Therefore I descended to the place of Lazarus and preached to the righteous and the prophets, that they might come out of the rest which is below, and go up to that which is above. And I poured out over them with My right hand (the water) of life and forgiveness and deliverance from all evil, as I have done to you and to those who believe in Me.'[3]

[1] For these and other points see E. Hennecke, *Handbuch zu den NT Apokryphen*, Tübingen, 1904, p. 85.

[2] P. 90, *supra*.

[3] C. Schmidt, *Gesprache Jesu mit seiner Jüngern nach der Auferstehung*, in *TU* xliii. [1919] 86–87. The Ethiopic text reads in the first sentence, 'I descended and spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, your fathers, the prophets,' and also reads 'the baptism of life' for '(the water) of life.'

The Ascension of Isaiah

The Vision of Isaiah in this composite work (chapters vi. to xi.) is regarded as a Christian writing, of which the date is given by Dr. Charles as towards the close of the first century A.D., but by Harnack as of the middle of the third century.[1] Isaiah is conducted through the Heavens, and in the seventh Heaven is told by the angel who leads him that the righteous there, though possessed of 'garments of the upper world,'[2] will not receive their crowns and thrones till the Beloved descends into the world in the last days. He will be thought to be a Man, not Divine (ix. 12, 13). The god of that world will cause Him to be crucified, not knowing who He is. His descent (to earth) will be hidden from the Heavens. When He has plundered the angel of death, He will ascend on the last day, with many of the righteous, who will then receive their garments (ix. 14–17). These, as Dr. Charles shows, must be the imperfectly righteous from Hades, since (ix. 7) all the righteous are already in Heaven and have their garments.[3]

One Latin version, supported here by a somewhat corrupt text in the Slavonic version, has the following passage instead of vv. 14–17: 'And He will descend into Hades and make it and its phantoms (*visiones*) desolate. And He will seize the Prince of Death and plunder him and destroy all his powers, and will rise the third day, and with Him certain righteous ones, and He will send His preachers into all the world, and will ascend into the Heavens.'

Soon after, Isaiah hears the Father telling Christ to go forth and descend through the Heavens to the firmament and this

[1] R. C. Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah*. London, 1900, pp. xi, etc.; A Harnack, *Gesch. der altchristl. Litteratur*, ii. 1. 579.

[2] *i.e.* Resurrection bodies.

[3] In Latin and Slavonic, 'certain of the righteous.'

world, and to the angel in Sheol, but not to Haguel (*i.e.* Gehenna). He will become like unto the likeness of all in the five Heavens and of the angels of the firmament. None of the angels of that world (*i.e.* this present world, cf. 1 Cor. ii. 8) will know who He is. Afterwards He will ascend from the angels of Death (*i.e.* Sheol), and will be transformed in each Heaven and sit on the Father's right hand (x. 7–16). Thereupon Isaiah saw Christ go from the seventh to the sixth Heaven, whose angels worshipped Him. He makes Himself like the angels of the five lower Heavens, so that they do not know Him nor worship Him. At the gates of the third, second, and first Heavens the password (or sign) is demanded of Him by their keepers and is given them. The same transformation and delivery of the password occur in the firmament, whose angels are envying one another and fighting. He descends farther and takes the form of the angels of the air (here first mentioned), who are plundering and doing violence to each other. Then follows Christ's birth of the Virgin in a miraculous manner, without pain to her. The birth is concealed; hence it and Mary's virginity escape the Heavens, the princes and gods of this world. Later, the adversary envied Him and roused the children of Israel against Him. He is crucified and descends to the angel of Sheol. Afterwards He rises and ascends, not now transforming Himself, and there is sorrow among the angels that they had not recognized Him. Now they worship Him (x. 17–xi. 52). Nothing is said here of the rescue of souls from Sheol.

Though there may be some Gnostic influence in the account of the transformations in the Heavens and the delivery of passwords, we need not assume that the *Ascension of Isaiah* is a Gnostic work. The same conceptions are found in the *Epistle of the Apostles*. They are based on such passages as S. John iii. 13 and S. Jas. iii. 15. The idea that the Eternal Christ, Logos, or Wisdom of God descended from Heaven to earth,

offered much play to Christian as to Gnostic fancy.[1] The invisible Descent to earth was known to Irenæus, and it accounts for the passages in other Fathers which relate the ignorance or the astonishment of the angels at Christ's victorious ascent.[2]

The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs

This Jewish work, composed *c.* 109–107 B.C., was subject to Christian interpolations, some before 50 A.D., some later.[3] These supply suggestions of the Descent doctrine, not elaborated. To a passage which speaks of Messiah taking from Beliar 'the captivity,' is added, as a Christian interpolation, 'the souls of the saints,' *i.e.* those in Hades. The taking of the captivity from Beliar is a favourite theme in this work, but here Beliar appears as lord of Hades, a conception 'quite unique in Jewish apocalyptic and also in old Christian literature.'[4] The passage continues: 'He shall turn the hearts of the disobedient (cf. S. Luke i. 17) to the Lord,' and give to them that call on Him eternal peace, and the saints shall rest in Eden, and in the New Jerusalem shall the righteous rejoice.'[5] There may be here a reference to the appearance of the risen saints in the Holy City—the tradition of the result of the Descent in S. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53, explained by early commentators as the Heavenly Jerusalem. An interpolated passage in the *Testament of Benjamin* refers first to the Crucifixion, and adds: 'And the veil of the temple shall be rent, and the Spirit of God shall pass on to the Gentiles as fire poured forth. And He shall ascend

[1] Isaiah's appearance also undergoes transformation in each Heaven which he passes through (vii. 25).

[2] Irenæus, *Εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος*, c. 84. Cf. p. 120, *supra*.

[3] *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Test.*, ed. R. C. Charles, Oxford, 1913, ii. 282, 291.

[4] C. Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 500.

[5] *Test. of Dan*, v. 11 ff.; in Charles, ii. 334.

from Hades, and shall pass from earth into Heaven.' [1] A further suggestion from S. Matt. xxvii. 52 may be seen in the passage in the *Testament of Levi*, about the rocks being rent, the sun quenched, the waters dried up, the fire cowering, creation troubled, the invisible spirits melting away. Here is added what is surely a Christian interpolation : 'And Hades despoiled through the suffering (ἐπὶ τῷ πάθει) of the Most High.' [2]

The Sibylline Oracles

This compilation, partly Jewish, partly Christian, contains also brief references to the Descent, possibly of second century date. The first of these runs : 'When He shall come to the house of Hades, announcing the Resurrection to the dead.' The other runs : 'He will come to Hades announcing hope to all His saints, the end of the ages and the last day, and will bring to an end the fate of Death.' [3]

The Acts of Thaddeus

Eusebius says that he derived his account of the preaching of Thaddeus before Abgar, king of Edessa, from Syriac records preserved at Edessa, the date of these being probably within the first half of the third century or a little later. From these he gives the Abgar-Thaddeus story, including a summary of the teaching of Thaddeus about our Lord. This contains a definite notice of the Descent, upon which no special emphasis is laid as if it were a new doctrine. 'Christ abased Himself and died and humbled His Divinity, and was crucified, and descended into Hades, and broke through the wall of partition (φραγμός, cf. Eph. ii. 14) which from eternity had not been broken, and

[1] *Test. of Benjamin*, ix. 3 f. ; in Charles, ii. 358–59.

[2] *Test. of Levi*, iv. 1 ; *ibid.* ii. 306–07.

[3] *Oracula Sibyllina*, bk. i. 377, bk. viii. 310 f., ed. J. Geffcken, in *Die griech. christlichen Schriftsteller.*

brought up (*ἀνήγαγεν*) the dead,[1] and He descended alone and rose with many, and so ascended to His Father.' [2]

The Syriac *Doctrine of Addai*, which may be the version used by Eusebius, but is by some considered of later date (*c.* 360–400), gives the reference thus: 'He descended to the place of the dead and broke through the wall of partition which had never been broken through, and gave life to the dead by being slain Himself, and descended alone, and ascended with many to His glorious Father.' [3]

Acts of Thomas (*c.* 200–250 A.D.)

Syriac and Greek texts of the *Acts of Thomas* exist, and in all probability they were first composed in Syriac in the neighbourhood of Edessa, where strong Gnostic influences had been at work. The *Acts* have a Gnostic colouring, but the references to the Descent have an orthodox if popular form. One occurs in a prayer of S. Thomas (c. 10). The Greek version runs: 'Christ, Son of the living God, the undaunted Power which hast overthrown the enemy, and the Voice heard by the Archons, which shook all their powers, the Ambassador who was sent from on high and descended into Hades; who, having opened the doors, brought up those shut up for many ages in the treasury of darkness, and didst show them the way that leadest up into the height.' [4]

The Syriac verson runs: 'Thou didst hurl the evil one from

[1] *var. lect.*: 'He arose and raised with Him the dead who had slept for ages.'

[2] Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* i. 13. 19, in *Die griech. christl. Schriftsteller*, ii. 1. 96, where the different readings are given. For 'with many,' some MSS. read 'with a great multitude.'

[3] W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents*, London, 1864, p. 7. Cf. E. von Dobschutz, *Christusbilder*, in *TU* xviii. [1899] pp. 113, 163 ff.

[4] *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, ed. R. A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet, Leipzig, 1891–1903, ii. 2. 115. The passage recalls that of the Edessene Acts of Thaddeus. For 'the Voice' cf. Ephrem Syrus, p. 111, *supra*.

his power, and call with Thy Voice to the dead, and they became alive. . . . Thou didst descend to Sheol, and go to its uttermost end, and didst open its gates and bring out its prisoners, and didst tread for them the path (leading) above by the nature of Thy Godhead.' [1]

In a later prayer occurs the following (c. 156): 'Thou who descendedst into Hades with great power: the Archons of Death could not endure the sight (of Thee). And Thou didst ascend with great glory, and gathering together all those who fled for refuge to Thee, didst prepare a way, and in Thy footsteps all whom Thou didst redeem journeyed. And Thou didst bring them into Thine own fold, mingling them with Thy sheep.' [2] The Syriac version corresponds to this, but has, after 'great power,' 'and the dead saw Thee and became alive, and the Lord of Death was not able to bear it.' [3]

The Syriac version preserves a further reference in a hymn sung by the apostle (lacking in the Greek version): 'Thy angels glorify Thee on high through Thy Messiah who became in Sheol peace and hope to the dead, who came to life and were raised.' [4]

In the story of the dragon and the young man (c. 32), the dragon, who declares himself son of him who sits on a throne over the whole earth, says: 'I am he that dwells in and holds the abyss of Tartarus, and the Son of God has taken His own out of me, and wronged me against my will'—probably a reference to the release of souls from Hades.[5]

[1] W. Wright, *Apocr. Acts of the Apostles from Syriac MSS.*, London, 1871, ii. 154–55. For 'prisoners' cf. *Odes of Solomon*, xvii. Cf. ii. 217: 'Glory to Thy Ascension into Heaven, by which Thou didst tread for us the way leading up on high.'

[2] Lipsius and Bonnet, *op. cit.* ii. 2. 265. [3] Wright, *op. cit.* ii. 288.

[4] Wright, *op. cit.* ii. 250; cf. A. S. Lewis, *Mythol. Acts of the Apostles*, London, 1904, p. 240.

[5] Lipsius and Bonnet, ii. 2. 149.

Another passage (c. 143) describes Christ as 'He who made the Archons stumble and did violence unto Death . . . whom the Archon beholding feared, and the powers with him were troubled. And the Archon bare witness—"Who is this and whence (is He)?" and he knew not the truth, because he is a stranger to the truth' (cf. S. John viii. 44, 'the devil . . . stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him').[1] This may refer to Christ's victory over the devil on the Cross, or to His appearance in Hades, with the traditional trembling of Hades and its powers at His presence (cf. the Archons of Death in a previous passage—Satan is not ruler of Hades, and cf. also the questions asked by Death and Hades in the *Testament of our Lord* and other documents).[2]

The Anaphora of Pilate

This document professes to be a report to Tiberius by Pilate concerning the Crucifixion and the wonderful events following. There are two recensions in Greek, as well as Syriac and Arabic texts. As to its date, Lipsius places it in the second half of the fifth century, but H. von Schubert thinks that Justin and the writer of the *Gospel of Peter* were acquainted with some form of the *Anaphora*, which would thus push it or its earlier source back to the beginning of the second century.[3] Tischendorf gives both Greek recensions (A and B).[4] Taking A first, we set the reference to the Descent in the Greek side by side with the Syriac version.

[1] Lipsius and Bonnet, ii. 2. 250.

[2] See pp. 77 ff., *supra*.

[3] R. A. Lipsius, 'Gospels, Apocryphal,' in *Dict. of Christian Biography*, ii. 708; H. von Schubert, *The Gospel of S. Peter*, Edinburgh, 1893, p. 182. There are some parallels of phrase and incident between the *Gospel* and the *Anaphora*.

[4] Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*.

Greek A.	Syriac.
During the earthquake at the Crucifixion :	
'Dead men arising were seen, as the Jews then bore witness, and said they were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs, Moses and Job, who died, as they say, three thousand five hundred years ago, and many more whom I also saw appearing in the body.' [1]	'Many graves were opened and many dead people rose from their graves, and the twelve patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had gone out of the world about two thousand years ago, I saw them with my own eyes in the body as they appeared also to all men.' [2]
During the night following the Sabbath the sun shone, and as lightning appears suddenly on a winter day, so	
'majestic men appeared in glorious apparel,	'there were seen men who were very great and tall of stature. These were clothed in garments of glory and wonder, who were very many and innumerable. Their voice went forth as of a great thunder :
an innumerable number, crying, whose voice was heard as a tremendous thunder :	
"Jesus who was crucified is risen, Come forth out of Hades ye that have been enslaved in the underground regions of Hades." '	"Arise, come, ye who were imprisoned in the lowest depths of Sheol." '
An earthquake followed, and other wonders :	
'The dead having been raised walked in the body in the midst.	'And there was seen a crowd of people who had come to life and rose from among the dead' . . . 'I saw also a vision of dead men, of those who had come to life and had risen, those whom I had never seen before.' [3]

[1] Tischendorf, p. 440.

[2] M. D. Gibson, *Anaphora Pilati*, in *Studia Sinaitica*, v. 4. The Arabic version runs : 'The dead appeared and stood, even as the Jews testify, that they saw Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Fathers, Moses and Job, who died as they say two thousand five hundred years ago.'

[3] Gibson, *op. cit.* The Arabic version has : 'The dead who rose and walked were very many, and He robbed Gehenna of its dead.'

'He that had raised all the dead and bound Hades, said: "Say to My disciples that they go before you into Galilee, there ye shall see Him."'[1]

Rescension B of the *Anaphora* gives only one account of the dead rising, namely, before the dawn of Easter. The sun shone out with unwonted brightness. 'Majestic men were seen in the air with rich apparel and of indescribable glory, and an innumerable multitude of angels crying, "Christ who was crucified is risen, being God"; and a voice like a great thunder was heard saying: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill among men. Come up out of Hades, ye that were enslaved in the depths of Hades."' There follows an earthquake. 'Then were seen in that fear dead men arising, as the Jews themselves witnessed and say that we saw Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs who died two thousand five hundred years ago, and we saw Noah appearing in the body, and all the multitude walked about praising God with a loud voice, saying: "The Lord our God who has risen from the dead has given life to all the dead, and plundered Hades and put him to death."'[2]

An *Epistle of Pilate to Herod* (fourth or fifth century) describes how Procla, Pilate's wife, saw the Risen Lord, who said: 'I have loosed the pangs of death and wounded the many-headed dragon.' Or, as in the Syriac version: 'I have burst the bands of death and have broken open the gates of Sheol.'[3]

The passages in the *Anaphora* are clearly dependent on S. Matt. xxvii. 52 f. References to the Descent in other apocryphal works show the same dependence. Thus, in the Syriac *History of John*, attributed to Eusebius and perhaps a fourth-century work, the earthquake at Christ's death is

[1] Tischendorf, *op. cit.*

[2] *Ibid.* p. 447 f. Cf. J. C. Thilo, *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*, p. 811 f. The 'majestic men' resemble the men of lofty stature in the *Gospel of Peter*. Cf. also 4 Esd. ii. 43; *Shepherd of Hermas*, Sim. ix. 6.

[3] M. R. James, *Apocr. Anecdota*, 2nd ser., in *TS* v. 1. 67, 72,

described. The rocks blocking the entrance of the tombs were split. 'The dead came forth and entered the city, crying out aloud, and they came and worshipped Christ as He hung upon the Cross, and many of them are (still) alive.' This takes place at the moment of Christ's death, and therefore simultaneously with the Descent. In the same work the demons say that their master fought with Christ, who overcame him. The devil says that he is now shut up in darkness.[1]

In the *Story of Peter and Paul* S. Peter says that Christ descended into Hades. Death was terrified at Him and hid himself. The dead rose from their graves and returned the greetings of the people.[2]

The Questions of S. Bartholomew

This work, of which the Greek text may date from the fifth century, is thought to represent the lost *Gospel of Bartholomew*, and its author is specially interested in the Descent. The apostle inquired of Christ where He had gone from the Cross, for when the darkness fell he had seen that He was no longer on it. Christ replied that He had gone down into Hades at the prayer of S. Michael to bring up Adam and all that were with him. The voice which the apostle had heard from under the earth with great wailing was that of Hades saying to Beliar: 'As I perceive, a God cometh hither.' The Slavonic and Latin versions here add that the angels cried to the powers: 'Remove your gates, ye princes, remove the everlasting doors, for behold the King of Glory cometh down.' Hades inquired: 'Who is the King of glory?' The Descent is made by stages of five hundred steps each. Hades is troubled because he hears the breathing of the Most High, but Beliar bids him be strong, for God has not descended on the earth. But as Christ draws nearer and the angels bid the doors to be removed he cries out:

[1] Wright, *op. cit.* ii. 16, 45, 87.

[2] Lewis, *op. cit.* p. 176.

'Woe is me.' Beliar says that it may be Enoch or Elias or one of the prophets, but Hades answers that these are not to come on the earth till the end of six thousand years. Beliar bids him make safe the gates and strengthen the bars, and consider that God cometh not down on the earth. Hades says: 'My belly is rent, my inward parts are pained. It cannot be but that God cometh hither. Whither shall I flee?' Christ then entered and scourged him and bound him with chains which cannot be loosed, and brought out all the patriarchs and came again to the Cross. Bartholomew says that he saw Christ again on the Cross and the dead rising and worshipping Him, and going again to their sepulchres. And he asks who was the man of very great stature whom the angels bore up in their hands, and why did he groan when Christ spoke to him. Christ replies that this was Adam the first-formed, for whose sake He came down to the earth. He had said to him that He hung on the Cross for him and for his children's sake, at which he groaned aloud.[1]

This account has many parallels to the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, the *Homilies* of Eusebius, etc., as we shall see. The Descent by stages recalls the Descent through the Heavens in the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Epistle of the Apostles*.

The Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, by Bartholomew the Apostle

This curious work, which exists only in Coptic, is probably not earlier than the fifth century and may be later. It purports to have been addressed by Bartholomew to his son Thaddeus. It has a Gnostic flavour, though it is not Gnostic, and is also coloured by pagan Egyptian conceptions.

Death came to Amente (Hades), inquiring about the soul of the dead Christ, and then with his sons, as serpents, went to

[1] James, *op. cit.* p. 167 f., and cf. *TS* v. 1. 155.

the sepulchre. It was filled with light and the body had a napkin over the face. Death complained of the careless watch kept in Hades, for Gehenna has gone cold and its servants are unoccupied. He asked Christ—'Who art Thou,' and Jesus, removing the napkin, laughed at him. Death and his sons fled in fear, but presently returned, and Death addressed Christ as 'He of whom those in the prison desire mercy.'[1] The Saviour, here called by the Gnostic name Iao, went on the chariot of the cherubim to Amente, broke the doors, smashed the bolts, dragged away the doorposts, overthrew the blazing furnaces and put out the fires, and, removing everything in Amente, left it like a desert. The shameless one was put in fetters and the ministers of Satan bound. Adam and all his sons were redeemed and all creation set free. 'He brought back Adam to the state wherein he was at first and forgave them (*i.e.* his sons) their sins.' Christ upbraided Judas, who was hurled headlong to outer darkness. Death and his sons returned to Amente and found it empty, save for Judas, Cain, and Herod, who had been left behind. In the account of the Resurrection which follows, Christ ascends to Heaven with all the captivity of the sons of Adam. The angels sing hymns because these are forgiven. Adam and Eve are brought back from Paradise, whither they had been taken, and set in the presence of the Father, who addresses them. The righteous also appear before God, and all now go to the Heavenly Jerusalem. Adam is set at the gate of life to salute the righteous who come to the city, and Eve is stationed over all women who do the will of God. Adam is eighty cubits high, Eve fifty, and Adam is of marvellous beauty. Three voices in lamentation are heard—

[1] Cf. the Valentinian doctrine of Christ. Death was overcome even in asserting its power. The Body died, but when Death, having thus exercised power over it, was about to seize it, the æon Soter, who had left the Body, sent down a ray of power and so frightened Death away. Clement, *Excer. ex Theod.* c. 61.

those of Judas, Cain, and Herod, as we learn from another fragmentary MS. of this work.[1]

The fate of Judas is also described in a Coptic document, the *Acts of Andrew and Paul*, which Lipsius considers to be of Gnostic origin. The two apostles are on a voyage, when S. Paul dives into the sea to visit Amente. When he returns he has a piece of wood in his hand. He tells how he saw Judas in Amente and asked him why he had not been delivered along with the other souls by Christ. Judas informs him that after the betrayal he had asked Christ to pardon him, and was told to go to the desert and repent, and to fear none but God, not even the devil if he came for him. On a mountain where he goes to fast, the devil appears with wide open mouth as if to swallow him, causing Judas in fear to prostrate himself before him as if he were his lord. Then Judas again seeks Christ, but He has been taken to the Prætorium. Now he hangs himself so that his soul may meet Christ's in Amente, but when the Lord comes He takes away all but Judas. The guardians of Amente mourned before Satan and said: 'Thou didst glorify thyself as king, but He who is thy King has come and taken the souls submitted to thy power.' The devil points out that Christ has not been able to deliver one soul, that of Judas. Jesus now calls S. Michael, who was with Him in the Descent, saying: 'Take the soul of Judas, and let not the devil vaunt himself of his power over Me.' When the soul of Judas is brought to

[1] E. A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, London, 1913, pp. 179 ff. and 216 f. Cf. James, *op. cit.* p. 182 f. Adam has a girdle of pearls round his loins; characters and signs are written on his forehead. The thongs of his sandals shine seven times brighter than sun and moon. Eve is adorned with the adornments of the Holy Spirit, and the Powers and the Virgin sing hymns to her in the celestial language, calling her Zoe, the mother of all living. The great height of Adam and Eve (cf. *Questions of S. Bartholomew, supra*) may be derived from Rabbinic lore, but the description has affinities with widespread beliefs, found in Gnosticism and elsewhere, about the Primal Man or *Urmensch*.

Christ he says that he committed suicide hoping that his soul would be delivered. Christ replies that he should have called on His aid and not been guilty of adoring the devil. For this he is now sent to Tartarus to remain there till the judgment. The piece of wood which S. Paul carries is part of the threshold of the gates of Amente, broken down by Christ. He also tells how he had seen the agreeable part of Hades, whence Abraham and others had been taken, and how he had heard much lamentation from another quarter, and this, as he learned, proceeded from murderers, poisoners, and others in those places whither Christ had not penetrated in His Descent.[1]

Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew

In one passage of this writing S. Andrew prays to Christ: 'Who hath broken the gates of brass and cut in pieces the bars of iron,' in order that the gates of the city which he desires to enter may open. This prayer is really a charm in which, as in many pagan and Christian charms, the action of a deity, saint, or of our Lord, is first described, and then follows a prayer or incantation desiring a similar effect to take place now.[2]

Gnostic Documents

For Gnosticism generally the doctrine of the Descent was held in a form differing from that of orthodox Christianity. The Descent concerned this world, regarded as dark and evil, and held in the power of the Demiurge. The Æon Christ descended through the Heavens of the Archons, invisibly or in their forms, to earth, and thus conquered the evil powers and proclaimed the good news, the Gnosis. This might be

[1] Migne, *Dictionnaire des legendes*, Paris, 1855, col. 721, 1041; R. A. Lipsius, *Die apokryphen Apostelgesch.*, Brunschweig, 1883–90, i. 616; James, *op. cit.* p. 472.

[2] Lewis, *op. cit.* p. 22.

regarded as an interpretation of the Christian Descent doctrine from a Gnostic point of view, but there has probably been influence from pagan mythology, as will be seen later.[1] According to Gnostic eschatology, there was no Underworld of the dead. Imperfectly righteous souls, the Psychicoi, including Abraham and other Old Testament saints, were in one of the Heavens after death. There they are enlightened by Christ and, on His ascent, removed to the region of light or sent into bodies for a new earth-life so that they may learn the mysteries of light and ascend to the kingdom of light. Such is the teaching of Theodotus and, in part, of the *Pistis Sophia*, and it is undoubtedly a reflexion of the orthodox Descent doctrine of Christ's preaching to and enlightening souls in Hades.[2] Gnostics could at times use orthodox language regarding Hades and Gehenna (or Tartarus), the former representing this world [3] or the place of temporal punishment or waiting of the righteous Psychicoi, not, however, under the earth ; the latter, the place where the evil world-serpent was confined or the torments which the Archons were ready to inflict on the ascending soul.[4] In the *Apocryphal Acts*, especially those which have a Gnostic colour if not more, it is difficult to say whether Hades and Gehenna are used in an orthodox or a Gnostic sense. Thus in the *Acts of John*, when the apostle prays, he speaks of Christ raising the soul from 'the things done in Hades.' [5] From the whole context 'Hades' would here seem to mean this world, and hence is used with a Gnostic significance. Those Gnostics

[1] This Descent to earth may be illustrated by the interpretation of Heracleon. When the Gospel speaks of Christ's going down to Capernaum, this means His Descent from the Pleroma to the lowest parts of this world. His going up to Jerusalem signifies His visiting the place of souls above, in the seventh Heaven, or the Middle Place, on His return to the Pleroma.

[2] See pp. 308–9, *infra*.

[3] Iren. v. 31. 2, 'who say that the lower region is this world.'

[4] Cf. *Acts of John*, c. 114.

[5] *Ibid.* c. 112.

who, instead of believing in the destruction of the unrighteous Psychicoi, claimed some kind of future punishment for them, held that they awaited the fire in an intermediate region in the Place (τόπος) of the Demiurge in one of the Heavens.[1] This might be interpreted as 'Hades.'

Marcion is an exception to the general Gnostic point of view in his doctrine of the Descent, *i.e.* an actual Descent of Christ to an underground Hades. With good reason C. Schmidt says that this shows 'he cannot be included among the true Gnostics, who from their standpoint could in no way admit as true a *Descensus ad inferos*.'[2]

The Gnostic conception of the Descent in relation to that of the Church will be considered in a later chapter.

[1] Iren. ii. 29. 1.

[2] C. Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 500.

CHAPTER IX

THE GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS

The apocryphal work known as the *Gospel of Nicodemus*[1] consists of two, or, more probably, three, parts—(1) the account of the Passion and Crucifixion, cc. 1–11 ; (2) the account of the Resurrection, cc. 12–16 ; (3) the story of the Descensus, cc. 17–29. Greek MSS. which give recension A contain only cc. 1–16. This recension has for title 'Memorials of our Lord Jesus Christ done in the time of Pontius Pilate.' It has a prologue which states that 'I, Ananias, the Protector,' sought out the memorials deposited by the Jews with Pontius Pilate, which were written in Hebrew, and by him translated into Greek, in the year 425 A.D. The next paragraph states that Nicodemus recorded in Hebrew 'these things' after the Cross and Passion and delivered them to the High Priest.

The Greek MSS. which give recension B contain a more diffuse form of cc. 1–16, and also cc. 17 ff.—the *Descensus* narrative. Some modification of the close of c. 16 has been made to suit the additional narrative, but it is very loosely joined to what precedes. Its title is 'A Narrative concerning the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Resurrection,' followed by the statement that it was written by a Jew called Æneas, and translated by Nicodemus, a Roman toparch, into Roman speech (= Greek) from Hebrew. A Prologue in some of the MSS. gives fuller details of this.

[1] The texts are given in Tischendorf and Thilo, translations in James pp. 117 ff.

There are two Latin recensions, A and B, both of which contain all three parts, but recension A, which has the Prologue and following paragraph of the Greek A, is much closer, in its account of the *Descensus*, to that of Greek B than is Latin B. The *Descensus*, in Latin B, differs in the order of the sections, in the phraseology, as well as in certain additions, especially in the opening section, and in some abridgments.

None of the MSS. are very old. The oldest MS. giving the whole narrative is Codex Einsidlensis, prior to the tenth century. The first part (cc. 1–16) is also found in a Coptic version (MS. of fifth century), and in two Armenian versions (recensions of one and the same version). There is also a Syriac version.[1] All these conform to the Greek recension A.

The title *Gesta Pilati* is given by Gregory of Tours, this clearly referring to the contents of the first part.[2] The title *Evangelium Nicodemi* is found in Vincent of Bellay and Jacobus de Voragine, but it had been in use before their time.[3]

We need not consider here the vexed question of the date of the first part, the *Acts of Pilate* strictly so called. It was certainly known to Epiphanius, *c.* 376, who refers to it in his *Panarion*. How much earlier it was than that is still disputed: Tischendorf and Conybeare dating it in the second century; Lipsius and many others in the fourth.[4]

There is practical unanimity that the *Descensus* section was originally a separate work. It may have been added by the editor of 425 A.D., who speaks of himself in the Prologue. The date of the *Descensus* narrative is also still disputed. Tischendorf

[1] Tischendorf, Proleg. p. lxxiii. Tischendorf gives a Latin translation of the Coptic in his notes to the Greek recension A. pp. 210 ff. Greek and Latin translations of the Armenian versions by F. C. Conybeare are in *Studia Biblica*, iv. part iii., 1896. The Syriac is edited in *Studia Syriaca*, ii.

[2] Greg. of Tours, *Hist. Francorum*, i. 21, 24.

[3] Tischendorf, p. lix.

[4] *Ibid.* p. lxv; Conybeare, *op. cit.* pp. 69 ff.; Lipsius, *Die Pilatus-Acten*, Kiel, 1871, p. 40.

thought that it was transcribed or drawn from an old apocryphon of the second century, written by a Christian of Jewish origin, imbued with Jewish theology and familiar with Gnostic ideas.[1] Lipsius considers it a Catholic edition, dating from the second half of the fourth century or first half of the fifth, of an earlier Gnostic account of the Descent composed in the first half of the third century.[2] Batiffol thinks it of more recent date than the first part, which he ascribes to the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth.[3] E. von Dobschutz considers that the *Descensus* section comes from an earlier written source, perhaps current under the name of Leucius Charinus, but whether Gnostic or not requires fresh consideration.[4] Harnack also traces this section to an older source, which was not Gnostic.[5] Maury regarded it as a fourth or fifth century compilation from Homilies and the like, and written particularly with a view of opposing, by a formal witness, the Apollinarian denials of Christ's Human Soul.[6]

That we have three texts of the *Descensus*, two in Latin, both probably translations from Greek texts, and one in Greek, the Latin B text differing much more from Latin A and the Greek text than these do from each other, is a testimony to the early popularity of this writing. The Latin A text represents a Greek text which is somewhat more diffuse (in

[1] Tischendorf, p. lxvii.

[2] Lipsius, *op. cit.* p. 44, and *Dict. of Christian Biography* ('Gospels, Apocryphal'), ii. 709.

[3] P. Batiffol, *Anciennes littératures chretiennes, i. La litt. grecque*[4], Paris, 1901, p. 39.

[4] E. von Dobschutz, in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, iii. 544 f., and *Zeitsch. für NT Wissenschaft*, iii. [1902] 90. Von Dobschutz compares the three sections of *Nicod.* to the three parts of the Acts of Martyrs: part i. representing the official process; part ii. (account of the Resurrection) corresponding to the account of the torture; and part iii.—the *Descensus*—representing the miracles ascribed to the saint.

[5] A. Harnack, *Gesch. der altchr. Litteratur*, Leipzig, 1893–1904, i. 1–22, ii. 1. 603.

[6] L. F. A. Maury, p. 326 f.

cc. 6, 7, 8, and 11) than our Greek text, but otherwise they do not much differ, though the use of such words as ἀρχιδιάβολος (c. 7), ἀρχισατράπης (c. 6), γυρεύειν (for ζήτειν, c. 7), and the description of S. John Baptist as ἀπὸ τῆς ἐρήμου ἀσκητής (Lat. *heremicola* and variants, c. 2), may suggest that the present Greek text is not older than the fourth century.[1] But the two forms of the text (Greek and Latin A) are so substantially alike, in contents, order, and diction, that they derive from a text not differing much from either, and which has been but slightly worked over. The story is too much of a unity in these texts to have been much different in the source.

The date of that source may quite well have been the first part of the third century, if not earlier. If such imaginative works as the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the *Acts of John*, and the like could be produced in the second century, there is no reason why such a work as this should not have been composed at an early date. The main incidents of the *Descensus*—S. John Baptist as forerunner in Hades, the deception of Satan, the breaking of the gates, the trampling on Hades, the rescue of the saints, including Adam—are all mentioned or implied in early documents or writers in such a manner as to show that they were already popular (the *Odes of Solomon*, *Ascension of Isaiah*, Ignatius, Hermas, the *Epistle of the Apostles*, the *Teaching of Addai*, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Clement, Origen).[2] The binding of Satan in connexion with the Descent is perhaps peculiar to this document at that time, but it was well known in connexion with millennial views current in early days, which are suggested also in the *Descensus* (cc. 6, 9). The description of Hades is also one which suits an earlier rather than a later date, when the conception of Hades was changing into that of the medieval Hell.

[1] Thilo, pp. 678, 736; Lipsius, p. 44.

[2] See the references to the relative matters in subsequent chapters.

If no such writing as the *Descensus* is specifically referred to in writers of the earlier period, this is true also of writers of the later period, when it is known to have existed. But the earlier date may be proved by the influence which the *Descensus* had on Christian thought. Though not directly quoted, it is used by writer after writer, who reproduce its phrases and its incidents. This is particularly true of a group of Syriac writers—the author of the *Acts of Thomas*, Ephrem Syrus, and Aphraates ;[1] but it is true also of Greek writers—Cyril of Jerusalem, Chrysostom, Eusebius of Alexandria, and the author of a Homily for Easter Eve ascribed to Epiphanius. Ephrem Syrus in his Hymns and Eusebius of Alexandria in his Homilies are merely expanding what they found in the *Descensus*.

Was the earliest version of the *Descensus* a Gnostic document, and are the present versions a Catholic reshaping of this ? This is the opinion of Lipsius, who thinks that the original version had its source in Marcionite or Ophite circles.[2] The Descent to Hades was not a Gnostic doctrine, or was held by Gnostics in a form peculiar to them. Marcion alone accepted it, but with him those whom the Saviour rescued were Cain and his kind, the Sodomites, Egyptians, and their kind, while the patriarchs and prophets were rejected.[3] The *Descensus*, as Lipsius admits, completely opposes this belief. Taking the present version of the *Descensus* as it stands, its whole purpose is to show the salvation of the Old Testament saints. Every incident leads up to this : these saints expect the coming of the Saviour, they quote their own prophecies concerning Him.

[1] Cf. Connolly, *JTS* xiii. [1912] 300, who maintains that Ephrem, in his Nisibene Hymns, is using a document with all the features of the *Gospel of Nicod.*, though probably not identical with any of the three recensions. This is true also of Aphraates in his Homily.

[2] Lipsius, *op. cit.* p. 41.

[3] See p. 151 for C. Schmidt's strong statement regarding Gnostics, Marcion, and the Descent.

Even if the devil in the *Descensus* represents Marcion's Demiurge, the whole drift of the present document is so opposed to his views, that it cannot be a Catholic recasting of a Gnostic original. It is, in fact, an original document. Its doctrine of the Descent is not Gnostic, but Catholic, and comes from orthodox doctrine. Both Marcion, in his doctrine of the Descent, and other Gnostic groups with their peculiar views about this doctrine, were drawing upon Catholic sources.

There are some details in the *Descensus* which are assumed to be Gnostic. When the devil speaks of 'my ancient people the Jews' (c. 4, Lat. A),[1] this is taken to represent the Gnostic doctrine of the Jews being the people of the Demiurge. But it is found in S. John viii. 44, 'Ye are of your father the devil,' and is a common view in the Fathers.[2] The adjuration of the rabbis to the sons of Simeon, 'by the God of Israel and Adonai' ('by the God Adonai and the God of Israel,' Lat. A; 'by the God Heloi and the God Adonai,' Lat. B), is not necessarily Gnostic, but a Jewish formula, Adonai being used in the Old Testament, or its vowels substituted for those of the Tetragrammaton. The passage describing Seth's going to Paradise to seek the oil of mercy from the tree of life is taken from the Jewish *Apocalypse of Moses*, and though the Gnostics and Ebionites had much to say regarding the oil or ointment from the tree of life, the conception was not peculiar to them.[3] The contrast of the tree of knowledge with the tree of the Cross is an early Catholic commonplace.[4] The opening of the gates of Paradise to the thief when the guardian angel or the flaming sword sees the Cross or the sign of the Cross, is compared to the formulæ or talismans by which the Gnostic soul gained entrance

[1] Cf. Euseb. Alex. in Migne, *PG* lxxxvi. 1. 397, 'my friends the Jews'; and see *Acts of Thomas*, c. 32.

[2] Thilo, p. 707.

[3] See Additional Notes, 7.

[4] *Ibid.* 11.

to the Heavens; but the power of the sign of the Cross was universally recognized in primitive Christian thought.

These ideas were largely shared by Gnostics and Catholics, and certain Gnostic views were entertained, at least tentatively, in orthodox circles. While there is nothing in the *Descensus* which could not have been received in these, and nothing which is specifically Gnostic, it is possible that it was composed by a writer who belonged to that widely extended border-line between orthodoxy and Gnosticism, in which beliefs common to both flourished. Anyhow, the popularity of the *Descensus*, and its enormous influence on art, literature, and popular fancy, show that it was regarded as above suspicion. It abounds in Scriptural passages and in echoes of the language of Scripture.

In the Greek text the narrators are the two sons of Simeon, raised from the dead. In Latin A text these sons of Simeon bear the names Leucius and Karinus. In Latin B text, without being identified as sons of Simeon, they are called Karinus and Leucius. It is obvious that these names are derived from that of Leucius Charinus, or Leucius, the real or fictitious name of the author of the *Acts of John*, to whom other *Acts* and apocryphal writings were ascribed.[1] If his name became attached to the original *Descensus* document as its supposititious author, a later transcriber or translator connected him with the two narrators of the story, applying his name to them as if it were that of two persons. Or the translator may merely have borrowed the names from some apocryphal writing ascribed to Leucius.[2]

[1] It is incredible that the author of the *Acts of John* could also have been author of the *Descensus*.

[2] The former is the theory of Lipsius, p. 40; the latter that of Beausobre, *Hist. Manich.* i. 371, and of Maury, *op. cit.* p. 294. In earlier references the name is given as 'Leucius': Photius (*c.* 890) first speaks of him as 'Leucius Charinus,' author of the apocryphal Acts. Charinus may have been a name attached to one or more of these Acts, and Photius may have combined the two as the name of one and the same writer. See 'Leucius Charinus' in *Dict. of Christian Biography*, iii. 703 f.

The *Descensus* is the first attempt to present a complete and rounded account of the Descent to Hades. The following is an analysis of the story as it is presented in the three texts —Latin A and the Greek conforming in the order of incidents and in contents, though some of the chapters are expanded in the Latin text; Latin B text differs in the order of incidents:

Latin A.	*Greek.*	*Latin B.*
1. Speech of Joseph to the Chief Priests, telling of the two sons of Simeon who have risen. Annas, Caiaphas, Nicodemus, Joseph, and Gamaliel send to bring the two men, who come to Jerusalem and write their story.	1. As in Latin A.	1. The Rabbis Addas, Finaës, and Egias tell how they met a multitude risen from the dead in Galilee, among them Leucius and Karinus. The Chief Priests send and find the sepulchres open. Nicodemus, Joseph, and the three Rabbis are sent to entreat Leucius and Karinus to come to Jerusalem. They meet twelve thousand who have risen. Karinus and Leucius come to Jerusalem and write their story. They then go back to their sepulchres. The story is read to the people.
2. The story begins with the appearance of a light in Hades. Testimony of Adam, Isaiah, Simeon. Arrival of S. John Baptist.	2. As in Latin A, but Abraham testifies instead of Adam.	2. A light in Hades, and the voice of Christ, commanding the gates to open. Satan appears in terror, begging the doors to be closed.
3. Seth's story of the oil of mercy.	3. As in Latin A.	3. Satan bids Hades make ready to receive Christ. Dialogue of Hades and Satan.
4. Satan arrives bidding Hades make ready to receive Christ. Dialogue of Satan and Hades.	4. As in Latin A.	4. The testimonies of the saints. Seth's story.

Latin A.	*Greek.*	*Latin B.*
5. The Voice—'Remove the gates.' Satan cast forth by Hades. Testimonies of David and Isaiah. The Voice again. David speaks. Christ appears.	5. As in Latin A, but Satan goes forth to withstand Christ. The testimonies are much shorter. The gates broken.	5. Testimony of Isaiah. S. John Baptist appears.
6. Hades and Death in fear. Their questions. Satan delivered to Hades.	6. As in Latin A, but shorter.	6. Testimony of David and Jeremiah. The Voice. Satan would flee, but is hindered.
7. Hades abuses Satan.	7. As in Latin A, but shorter.	7. The Voice. Appearance of the robber in Hades. The Voice again.
8. Rescue of Adam, who addresses Christ, and of the saints. Their praises.	8. As in Latin A, but shorter.	8. The gates broken. Christ enters. Satan bound and abused by Hades.
9. The saints taken to Paradise, meet Enoch and Elijah.	9. As in Latin A.	9. Christ greets Adam, who, with Eve and the saints, praises Him.
10. The robber appears.	10. As in Latin A.	10. The Cross set up in Hades, whence all go out.
11. End of the story. The two men disappear.	11. As in Latin A, but shorter.	

The Latin B text offers some curious contradictions. The gates are ordered to be opened, yet immediately after we learn that they are open and Satan desires them to be closed (c. 2). Satan appears in terror, and then bids Hades prepare to receive Christ, over whom, as he thinks, he has been victorious. Here, too, the thief comes to Hades, not Paradise, and there is no description of the entry of the saints to Paradise.

We now summarize the contents of the story from the Greek recension, giving the variants or additions of the Latin A recension in brackets.

1. It opens with an address of Joseph of Arimathea to

Annas, Caiaphas, and others, about Christ's Resurrection. He rose not alone, but raised up many dead men, who had been seen in Jerusalem.[1] Among these are the sons of Simeon (named in Lat. A Leucius and Karinus). Their graves are open, and they are in Arimathea. Joseph proposes that they should be sought for, and he and others go to Arimathea. Leucius and Karinus go with them to Jerusalem, where they are adjured to tell what had happened.[2] They make the sign of the Cross, and ask for writing materials. Each of them writes the story.

2. It begins with prayer to Christ for grace to reveal the mysteries performed by Him in Hades.[3] They were in Hades (in the deep, in obscurity of darkness, Lat. A) with all that have fallen asleep since the beginning[4] (our fathers, Lat. A), when at midnight appeared a bright light like the light of the sun (a golden heat of the sun and a purple royal light). They were enlightened, and beheld one another. Abraham (Adam) and the patriarchs and prophets rejoice, saying, This light cometh from the great enlightening (This light is the author of eternal light, which promised to send us His co-eternal light).[5] Isaiah says that it is of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, of which he had prophesied, the land of Zabulun, etc. (Isa. ix. 1, 2). (Simeon comes and tells how he received Christ as a Child and said, Now mine eyes have seen, etc., S. Luke ii. 29 f.) S. John

[1] See Additional Notes, 5.

[2] The opening section of Latin B is quite different (see analysis above). The multitude of white-robed men met by the rabbis say that Christ raised them from the dead and destroyed the gates of darkness. The souls of the saints are taken thence and have ascended to Heaven with Christ. Meanwhile they have been commanded by Christ to walk in that region, speaking with none save whom it shall please Him. When they are seen by Nicodemus and the others, they are heard rejoicing because of Christ's Resurrection. An angel bids Nicodemus seek Leucius and Karinus in their house.

[3] In Greek text, Hades, in Latin A, Inferus, in Latin B, Infernus when Hades is personified, but *apud inferos* for 'in Hades.'

[4] The common idea of Hades. Cf. Tertullian, *de Anima*, c. 55: 'every soul is detained in safe keeping in Hades till the day of the Lord.'

[5] See Additional Notes, 6.

Baptist now appears, and being asked by the patriarchs who he is, tells his story, how he baptized Christ and how He sent him unto them also to proclaim that He is coming hither (to visit us, the Dayspring, the Son of God, coming from on high to us that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, S. Luke i. 78, 79), that whosoever believeth on Him may be saved, and whoso believeth not may be condemned. When they behold Him, let them worship Him, for now is the time of repentance for them, for that they worshipped idols in the world above, and for the sins by them committed ; at another time it is impossible that this should come to pass.

3. Adam, the first formed and first father (*πρωτόπλαστος*[1] *καὶ προπάτωρ*), bids Seth tell whither, when dying, he sent him. Seth tells how he was sent to pray God at the gates of Paradise to lead him by His angel to the tree of mercy, that he might take the oil and anoint Adam in order to heal him. While doing this an angel appears (Michael, 'set over the body of man'), who says that the oil could not be given him then, but he must tell Adam that after five thousand five hundred years from the creation, the Son of God would become man, and would anoint him with that oil, and he will arise (*ἀναστήσεται*), and with water and the Holy Ghost He will wash him and them that come of him. (He will raise the body of Adam and the bodies of the dead. After His baptism He will anoint with the oil of mercy all that believe on Him. The oil will be to all generations born of water and the Holy Ghost. The Son of God will bring Adam into Paradise to the tree of mercy.)[2] Hearing this, all rejoice.[3]

[1] 'Protoplast' occurs in Wisd. vii. 1, x. 1, and is a common term for Adam in the Fathers.

[2] Some texts read 'all the human race.' Cf. *Hermas*, Sim. viii. 3.

[3] This story is taken from the Jewish *Apoc. of Moses*, but the promise of Christ's coming is added here, and it was then transferred in place of an apocalyptic notice to the later *Vita Adæ*. See Additional Notes, 7 and 8.

4. Satan now appears and bids Hades, who devours all and is insatiable, prepare to receive Jesus, who calls Himself Son of God, but is a man, and by his assistance the Jews have crucified Him. He fears death, and even now has said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. He has done him much hurt, persecuting his servants and healing those whom he had caused to be maimed, the blind, lame, leprous, or raising those whom he had made ready to be buried (whom he had brought dead to Hades). Hades objects that if He is so mighty, no one will be able to withstand Him (all the mighty of the earth are subject to the power of Hades, yet Jesus, though He fears death, resists Satan's power. If He be so mighty in His Humanity, He is almighty in His Divinity). He must have said that He feared death in order to make sport and laugh at Satan, so as to seize him with a mighty hand, and woe shall be to him for endless ages.

Satan scorns the fear of all-devouring and insatiable Hades. He has set on [1] (*ἐνήργησα*) the Jews (my ancient Jewish people) against Him. They crucified Him and gave Him gall mingled with vinegar to drink (I have sharpened a spear to pierce Him, gall and vinegar mingled I have given Him to drink, I have prepared wood to crucify Him and nails to transfix Him). Let Hades be prepared to hold Him fast when He comes (His death approaches that I may bring Him unto thee to be subject to thee and me).

Hades objects that if He has already taken away the dead, how can He be held by them ? (many have taken the dead from

[1] The word suggests possession by the devil. In the corresponding passage of Eus. of Alex., the word used is *παρώξυνα*. For ' my ancient Jewish people,' cf. S. John viii. 44. In Eus. Alex., ' my friends the Jews.' The Jews were governed by the lawless serpent, according to the *Acts of John*, c. 94. Origen says that those who killed Jesus were prompted by the will of the demons, *in Matt.* tom. xiii. 8. Cf. *Gospel of Bartholomew*, iv. 7 (James, p. 173), ' the adversary of men . . . caused Him to be hanged upon the tree.'

me not by their own power but by prayer to God: who can this Jesus be who takes dead men from him by His own word without prayer?).[1] Lately he had swallowed Lazarus, and one of the living snatched him away from his bowels by a word—I think this must be He (Satan admits that it is He). If we receive Him, we shall be in danger of losing the others. 'I have swallowed all from the beginning: I perceive that they are restless, my belly is in pain.'[2] The departure of Lazarus is no good sign, for he flew away not like a dead man but like an eagle, so instantly did the earth cast him forth (like an eagle shaking himself he leaped forth,[3] departing from us with agility and swiftness, and the earth which held his dead body restored it alive). Bring Him not here, He comes to raise all the dead: not one of the dead will be left in me (He will loose all who are shut up in the harshness of the prison and bound in the indissoluble chains of sins, and lead them to the life of His Divinity for ever).

5. While they are thus debating, a great Voice as of thunder (and a spiritual cry) is heard: 'Lift up your gates, ye princes, and be lifted up, ye everlasting gates, and the King of Glory shall come in.' Hades bids Satan go out and withstand Christ (Depart, go out of my abode, fight Him if thou art so mighty. Hades cast Satan out of his abode). He bids his demons make fast the gates and bars, and be watchful. If He comes in, woe will take hold of them (resist strongly, lest we that hold captivity be taken captive).

[1] Cf. Ephrem Syrus, p. 112, *supra*: 'Elisha brought the dead to life. If he could do this, how many will Jesus bring to life?'

[2] For the belly of Sheol, or the grave, cf. Jonah ii. 2, Sirach li. 5; and cf. *Gospel of Bartholomew*, i. 19 (James, p. 168): 'Hades saith . . . my belly is ent and mine inward parts are pained.'

[3] Cf. Wisd. xviii. 15, 'Thine all-powerful word leaped from heaven.' See Additional Notes, 9.

The forefathers bid Hades, devouring all and insatiable, open the gates. David tells how he prophesied about this, citing Ps. xxiv. 7 (Lat. A cites Ps. cvii. 15, 16). Isaiah says he foresaw this by the Holy Ghost and wrote, 'The dead shall arise, and they in the tombs shall be raised, and they in the earth shall rejoice'; and again, 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?' (Isa. xxvi. 19, Sept.; Hos. xiii. 14). (The saints bid Hades open the gates: now he will be overcome.)

The Voice again cries, 'Lift up, etc.' Hades asks, as if he knew it not, 'Who is this King of Glory?' The angels reply, 'The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.' (David makes the reply to 'most foul and fetid Inferus,' citing Ps. xxiv. 8, cii. 19, 20.)[1] Then the gates and bars are broken in pieces and the dead loosed from their chains. The King of Glory entered as a man (in form of a man), and all the dark places of Hades were enlightened.

6. Hades cried out: 'We are conquered: woe to us. Who art Thou, possessing such authority and power? What manner of man art Thou entering here without sin, little in appearance but great in power, humble yet exalted, a slave and a lord, a soldier and king, with power over the dead and the living? Thou wast nailed to the Cross, and placed in the tomb, and now Thou art free and hast destroyed all our power. Art Thou then Jesus, of whom the archsatrap Satan said that by Thy Cross and death Thou wouldst inherit the whole world?' (Lat. A does not speak of the breaking of the gates, but tells of the terror of Hades and Death and their wicked ministers, and amplifies the questions of Hades, one of which is: 'Who art Thou who loosest those bound by original sin, and recallest them to their former freedom? Who art Thou who pourest Thy Divine light on those

[1] See Additional Notes, 10.

blinded by the darkness of sins?' The legions of demons also ask questions.)[1]

Christ takes hold of Satan, delivering him to the angels, saying: 'Bind his hands and feet and neck and mouth with irons.' Then He delivers him to Hades, saying: 'Take and hold him fast until My second coming' (He trampled on Death, and taking Satan the prince, delivered him to the power of Inferus, and drew Adam to His own brightness).

7. Hades addresses Satan in scorn as Beelzebub, inheritor of fire and torment, enemy of saints. Why did he cause Christ to be crucified, so that He should come here and strip them naked? 'Turn and see that no dead one is left in me, but all that thou didst gain by the tree of knowledge is lost by the tree of the Cross.'[2] His joy is turned to sorrow; desiring to slay the King of Glory, he has slain himself. Now he will learn what ill Hades will do him. What ill did the arch-devil, the head of death, the root of sin, find in Jesus that he wrought His destruction? How could he do such wickedness? How could he desire to bring Him into this darkness, whereby he has lost all the dead from the beginning? (Beelzebub, prince of perdition and chief of destruction, derision of angels, spitting of the just,[3] had promised great spoils by His death. Like a fool, he knew not what he did. Now Jesus has put to flight all the darkness of death by the splendour of His Divinity, and broken the strong depths of the prisons,[4]

[1] For these questions, which resemble those in the Mystagogia and in Athan. *de Virg.*, see pp. 77 ff., *supra*. 'Possessing such authority and power' is verbally the same as one of the questions in *de Virg.* For 'destroyed our whole power,' cf. Col. ii. 15, Phil. ii. 10.

[2] See Additional Notes, 11.

[3] Some texts read 'Three-headed Beelzebub'; cf. Eus. Alex. p. 181, *infra*, where the same expression is used, with the words ἔκπτωμα τῶν ἀγγέλων, κατάγελως τῶν ἁγίων.

[4] *Firma ima carcerum.* One MS. reads *ima carcerum et summa*, upper and lower parts of Hades. Cf. the 'region with many dark places' of S. Perpetua's vision, and the dark prison of souls in the vision of Hell in *Acts*

and released the captives and loosed the bound. All who were used to sigh under our torments insult us [this is much expanded]. Prince Satan, possessor of the keys of the Underworld (*inferorum*), the riches which he acquired by the tree of prevarication and the loss of Paradise, he has lost by the tree of the Cross, etc.[1] Christ says to Hades: 'Satan the prince shall be in thy power for all ages in place of Adam and his children, My righteous ones.')

8. Christ spread forth His right hand [2] and took Adam and raised him (stretched forth His hand saying, Come to Me, all My saints which bear My image and likeness), and turning to the others bade them come, as many as had suffered death through the tree which Adam touched. 'I raise you all up through the tree of the Cross.' ('Ye who were condemned by the tree, and the devil, and death, see how by the tree the devil and death are condemned.' All the saints are united under His hand. Holding Adam's hand, He bestows peace on him and his children. Adam in tears kneels before Him, and recites Ps. xxx. 1–5. The saints kneel down, acknowledging that the Law and prophets are fulfilled.[3] The living are redeemed by the Cross, and by the death of the Cross Christ has descended to them to save them. As the title of His glory has been set by Him in the heavens and the title of redemption, the Cross, set up on earth, so they beg Him to place the sign of the victory of His Cross in *infernum*, that Death may rule no longer.) [4]

With that He cast them all forth,[5] and Adam gives thanks

of Thomas, c. 57. 'Prisons' suggest various divisions with different punishments, as in many visions of the Other World.

[1] See Additional Notes, 12, 13.

[2] Cf. *Epist. of Apostles*, p. 135, *supra*.

[3] See Additional Notes, 14.

[4] Latin B tells how the Lord set up the Cross, the sign of victory, in Hell. See Additional Notes, 15.

[5] Ἐξέβαλεν. Cf. Eus. of Alex. p. 182, *infra*, Christ ἐξέβαλεν all the prophets from Hades.

partly in the words of Ps. lxxxvi. 13 that he has been brought up out of the lowest Hades.[1] The prophets and saints also give thanks.

The Saviour blesses Adam on his forehead with the sign of the Cross, as well as all the patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, and forefathers. He took them and sprung up out of Hades. As He went, the holy fathers sang: 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Alleluia. To Him be the glory of all the saints' (after the Cross is signed over Adam and the saints, Christ takes Adam's right hand and ascends *ab inferis*. David cries in the words of Ps. xcviii. 1–2, 'O sing unto the Lord a new song, etc.' The saints answer: 'Such honour have all His saints. Amen. Alleluia.' Habakkuk cries: 'Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people, to set free Thy chosen' [Hab. iii. 13]. The saints answer: 'Blessed is He that cometh, etc. God is the Lord and hath showed us light. Amen. Alleluia.' Micah cries in the words of Mic. vii. 18 f., 'What god is like Thee, etc.' The saints answer: 'This God is our God for ever and ever. He shall be our guide for ever. Amen. Alleluia.' The prophets all spoke from their own sayings. The saints followed the Lord, crying Amen. Alleluia).

[In Latin B, c. 9, the saints flock together under the hand of the Lord, singing Alleluia. Then the Saviour searching through all, bit *Infernum*,[2] and cast part into Tartarus, and brought part with Him on high. The saints besought Him to

[1] 'The lowest Hades.' In Latin A (quoting Ps. xxx. 3), *ab inferis . . . in lacum*. As Adam is with the patriarchs in c. 2, Latin A, and c. 3, Gk. and Lat., 'the lowest Hades,' due to the words of the Psalm quoted, need not mean that he was separate from the others in a lower place. In Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Hom.*, where Christ comes to possess τὰ κατώτατα τῶν κατωτάτων, Adam is in the innermost place. In Latin B, c. 9, Eve also casts herself at Christ's feet, then rises and kisses His hands, saying, 'Behold the hands that fashioned me.'

[2] Another text reads '*Infernus* was in grief.'

leave the sign of victory, the holy Cross, *apud inferos*, lest His evil servants should prevail to keep back any one accused whom the Lord absolved. The Lord set up His Cross *in medio inferni*, and it will remain there for ever. 'Then we all went out thence with the Lord, leaving Satan and *Infernum* in Tartarus.']

9. Christ now went into Paradise holding Adam by the hand, and delivered him and all the righteous to the archangel Michael.[1] As they entered the gate, two aged men met them, and to their question: 'Who are ye who have not seen death nor descended to Hades, but dwell in Paradise with your bodies and souls?' one of them replied that he was Enoch and the other Elijah. They will be there till the end of the age, then they will be sent by God to assist Antichrist and will be slain by him. After three days they will rise and be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord.[2]

10. Now appears a man of humble aspect bearing a cross on his shoulder (carrying on his shoulders the sign of the Cross).[3] The saints ask him who he is that has the appearance of a robber, and what the Cross (the sign) is that he bears. He tells them that he is a robber who was crucified with Christ. He had seen the signs that were done and, believing on Him, besought Him, saying: 'Lord, when Thou shalt reign, do not forget me.' Christ answered: 'Verily, verily, to-day I say unto thee, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.' ('He gave me the sign of the Cross, saying, Carrying this, go to Paradise, and if the angel guarding Paradise does not permit thee to enter, show him this sign of the Cross, and say to him that Jesus Christ, Son of God, has sent me.') He had come, bearing his cross, and found Michael, and said that Christ had sent him. 'Bring me to the gate of Eden.' The flaming sword, seeing the sign of the Cross,

[1] For a possible source of this in the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, see p. 284, *infra*.

[2] This suggests millennial views on the part of the writer.

[3] See Additional Notes, 16.

opened the gate and he entered. Michael bade him wait a little, for Adam and the righteous were coming. Now he had come to meet them. The saints then cried: 'Great is our Lord, and mighty is His power.' (Michael opens the gate and bids him wait, for Adam and the saints are coming after the triumph and glory of the Ascension of Christ who was crucified. The saints cry: 'Blessed be the Almighty Lord, the Father of eternal good things and the Father of eternal mercies, who hast given such grace to Thy sinners and hast led them back to the grace of Paradise and to Thy rich pastures, for this is the most certain spiritual life. Amen. Amen.')

11. All these things the two brethren saw and heard, and were sent by Michael to proclaim the Lord's Resurrection, but first to go to Jordan and be baptized. This they did, and were baptized with others who had risen. Then they went to Jerusalem to keep the Passover of the Resurrection. They then gave up the writings and vanished suddenly.

(They are charged by Michael to go with their brethren to Jerusalem, to remain in prayer, glorifying the Resurrection. They are to speak to no one, until they are permitted by the Lord to reveal these mysteries. They must go over Jordan, to a place fruitful and rich, where are many who rose with them for a testimony of the Resurrection. Three days only were given to them to celebrate in Jerusalem the Passover of the Lord with their living relatives. They were baptized in Jordan and received white robes. After the three days, when they had kept the Passover, all who had risen with them were caught up in the clouds and taken beyond Jordan and seen no more. The two brethren were bidden to remain in Arimathea and continue in prayer. Having given up the writings, they were transfigured, exceeding white, and were no more seen.) The command in this section of Latin A to go over Jordan to a rich and fertile place perhaps refers to the moment of their

vanishing, just as the others were caught up and taken beyond Jordan. This place may be the earthly Paradise.[1]

The story ends with an account of the confusion and sorrow of priests and people on reading the writings.

This *Descensus* story is one of the most interesting writings of the early Christian centuries, well conceived, skilfully told, and presenting a complete and effective narrative. As passages of the prophets and psalmists were taken in the Gospels to show how they were fulfilled in our Lord's earthly life, so in this apocryphon the prophets, David, Simeon, quote their own sayings to show how they are fulfilled in His coming to Hades. They are quoted, too, at appropriate moments. When the light shines in Hades, there are references to light by Simeon, who quotes his Nunc Dimittis, and by Isaiah. When the gates are commanded to be opened by the Voice, David and Isaiah quote pertinent passages. The story told by Seth, taken from Jewish tradition, shows the fulfilment of the time, five thousand five hundred years since the creation to the Incarnation inaugurating the redemption of Adam. S. John Baptist is Christ's forerunner in Hades as on earth, telling the story of the Baptism and quoting the Benedictus, so appropriate to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Enoch and Elijah, translated according to Old Testament story (cf. Ecclus. xliv. 16, xlix. 14), are seen in Paradise, where Jewish and early Christian tradition placed them. There also the thief from the cross found entrance. Christ's advent in Hades is a reduplication of His first coming on earth.

In all this the writer shows not only a capacity for using

[1] In Latin B, when the story is completed, the two brethren go back to their sepulchres. There is no account of the entry into Paradise, or of the meeting with Enoch, Elijah, and the robber. The story ends with the command to the two and many others to rise with their bodies and bear witness to the Resurrection and the Descent. These are the multitude seen by the Rabbis at the opening of the story.

incidents and giving to each its allotted place in a carefully planned story, but a real sense of the continuity of history and the directing hand of Providence. The dialogues of Satan and Hades are well sustained and incisive, showing both the timidity of Hades and then his joy in the overcoming of Satan, and the boasting and, later, the collapse of Satan. So, too, the joy and worship of the ransomed saints is expressed with feeling and beauty, and has something of a liturgical aspect, especially in the Latin versions. There is a tenderness in the incident of Christ's taking Adam by the hand. The literary artifice by which it is shown how knowledge of events in Hades was gained is itself imaginative, as indeed is the whole story. Leucius and Karinus are sent back to earth for the very purpose of disclosing these secrets, and when their part is played, they vanish. The author was a man with true artistic and dramatic sense, and by using a subject which was becoming popular, he increased its popularity tenfold.

Many passages in such writers as Cyril of Jerusalem, Firmicus Maternus, and especially Ephrem Syrus, Aphraates, Eusebius of Alexandria, and others correspond to descriptions and incidents in this apocryphon. But especially in Ephrem Syrus and Eusebius there is diffuseness where our author is concise. He gives a connected story in which each part is essential and serves to illustrate his purpose of presenting a kind of philosophy of history with our Lord as the central Figure, as well as a doctrinal story. He has the art of condensing, as may be seen by comparing his dialogues between Hades and Satan with those in Ephrem and Eusebius.

If Maury's theory were correct, that he is a late writer, a plagiarist, using material found in those authors just mentioned and others, then he is a plagiarist of genius who knew what to take and what to leave, a writer of fiction who has selected his materials with a view to a clear and concise story. Much more

likely he is an early writer, using traditional material as well as his knowledge of the Bible in order to produce an original narrative, and one who influenced contemporary and later writers.

His story influenced Byzantine art, which depicts Christ with His Cross advancing upon the gates of Hell, as well as other incidents in the narrative. In the West, its effect on art was later but quite as strong. There, too, the story was rendered in several vernacular tongues—Anglo-Saxon, English, French, German, Italian. It is enshrined in the *Golden Legend.* It was told by poets. It influenced Dante. It was transformed into one of the most popular of the Mystery Plays—*The Harrowing of Hell.*[1]

[1] See Thilo, *op. cit.* pp. cxlii ff.; Maury, *op. cit.* p. 329 f.; M. Nicolas, *Études sur les évangiles apocryphes*, Paris, 1866, p. 315; L. Bréhier, *L'Art chrétien*, Paris, 1918, pp. 101, 138 ff., 243; J. Monnier, *La Descente aux enfers. Étude de pensée religieuse, d'art, et de littérature*, Paris, 1905. See also *The Golden Legend*, ed. F. S. Ellis, London, 1900, i. 95 ff.

CHAPTER X

HOMILIES ASCRIBED TO EUSEBIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

Certain Homilies—(1) 'On "Art Thou He that should come?"'; (2) 'On the Coming of John into Hades'; (3) 'On the Devil and Hades'; (4) 'On the Passion, for the Preparation Day'—are interesting as examples of the elaborated story of the Descent and also as expanded versions of the *Descensus* in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. They are ascribed to Eusebius of Alexandria, a writer whose date is uncertain—fifth or sixth century. The second, third, and fourth have also been ascribed to Eusebius, bishop of Emesa in Syria, 341–359 A.D.[1] The first is also ascribed to Eusebius of Alexandria, the second to Eusebius of Emesa, the third to a writer unknown, the fourth to S. John Chrysostom [2] (among whose works it is printed as spurious). Though the Homilies are thus of uncertain date and authorship, there is a certain continuity of thought in them. The first, dealing with S. John Baptist's question to our Lord, will be discussed in a later chapter. We shall give a summary of the others here.

The Homily 'On the Coming of John into Hades' begins by telling how the Forerunner, after his death, came to those shut up in Hades, who, seeing the splendour of his light, re-

[1] These Homilies will be found conveniently in Migne, *PG* lxxxvi. i. 379 f., 383 f., 509 f., and (the fourth) in *ibid.* lxii. 721 f.

[2] P. Battifol, *Anciennes littératures chrétiennes: i. La littérature grecque*, Paris, 1901, p. 253.

cognized him, and began to question him about the Sun of Righteousness. Great was their consolation, for they knew that the presence of Christ must be near, John being as the Morning Star heralding the dawn. He made known to them that the Sun of Righteousness was coming to lead them thence. Hearing this, they ran to John, saying: 'The Lord is near. Great despair possessed us. But if at last He comes, and frees us from this tribulation, all the things prophesied of Him are now fulfilled.' John therefore asked the prophets to relate what they had foretold of Christ, that those in Hades may be of good cheer.

David, the prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Hosea, Isaiah again, Zechariah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, three separate prophecies), and various psalmists then recite passages foretelling our Lord's Descent from Heaven, His Virgin-Birth, the flight to Egypt, His choice of disciples, His miracles, His destroying the Sabbath, His betrayal, His Crucifixion, His burial, His destroying the gates and bars of Hades, and His raising the dead from Hades.[1]

While they spoke thus and all rejoiced, Hades said to the devil, 'Of whom do these proud ones speak? Who is he whose coming has made them rejoice?' The devil bade him not be afraid. 'This is John Baptist, and he is magnanimous. He did great things on earth and bore witness of Him whom he now announces to them. He did me some harm, but I entered into Herodias and caused his death. And He whom he said would save the world, could not save him, but fled to Galilee, fearing that Herod would kill Him. Thus I knew Him

[1] The passages cited are respectively Ps. lxxii. 6; Isa. vii. 14; Mic. v. 2; Hos. xi. 1; Ps. xlv. 16; Isa. xxxv. 5, 6, i. 14; Zech. xi. 12; Jer. xi.19; Ps. lxi. 2; Isa. liii. 12; Ps. lxix. 21, lxxxviii. 6; Isa. xlv. 2, xxvi. 19. All this corresponds to the opening sections of *Nicodemus* (c. 2 f.) where, at the light appearing in Hades, Abraham, the patriarchs, and prophets rejoice, and Isaiah quotes ix. 1, 2 (Greek version: in Latin A, Adam, patriarchs, and prophets rejoice. Isaiah quotes ix. 1, 2, and Simeon Luke ii. 30 f.). John then appears. The passages cited by prophets and psalmists in the Homily are not found in *Nicodemus*.

to be a man, since He feared death. My trouble was relieved, for I was greatly troubled at first and feared that He would make us prisoners.'

Hades replies, 'Beware, brother, lest in desiring great gain we lose all. No one is our friend: all hate us. If evil happen to us, we shall have no consolation. Are these prophets to receive their bodies? If they do, and if they go out hence, how we shall be derided! And if the multitude of sinners also go hence, the whole world will note our weakness. Beware, then, lest we be mocked at. For these rejoice greatly, hearing the things concerning Him.'

The devil replies that he need not fear. 'I know who He is, and do not fear Him. Jesus is a man, eating, drinking, and sleeping. His mother is called Mary: His father Joseph is skilled in carpentry. When He was born Herod sought to kill Him, and His parents fled to Egypt. But if He then escaped my hands, now He will fall into them, and I will give Him to you. I shall enter into the Jews and rouse them, and they will deliver Him to judgment and crucify Him, and take away His memory from the earth. I will give Him into thy hands, and then those (in Hades) shall lament. Meanwhile, secure thy gates well, and you need fear none of these things with which they would terrify thee.' [1]

The Homily ends by telling how the devil moved the Jews against Christ, and with reflexions on their sin.[2]

The Homily, 'On the Devil and Hades,' begins by telling how the devil, having heard Christ say, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death,' believed that He was afraid of

[1] These sections correspond partially to c. 4 (Gk. and Lat. A) of *Nicodemus*. There is a much closer correspondence between that chapter and the next Homily.

[2] Migne, *PG* lxxxvi. 1. 509 ff.

death. He ran to Hades and said: 'Brother Hades, let us be ready, prepare a safe place that we may make Jesus fast here, whom John and the prophets say is coming to cast us out. I have prepared His death. I prepared nails, sharpened a spear, mixed vinegar and gall. I urged on the Jews as bolts against Him. I made His disciple ready to betray Him. Only, be thou ready to receive Him, for in two days I will bring Him to thee. He has done me many evil things on earth, and has provoked me. Whom I slew, He restored with a word. Him whose limbs I paralysed, He restored and bade him take up his bed. Others I blinded, depriving them of light, and He restored their sight.' Then follow references to the miracles at the Pool of Siloam, at Gadara, on Jairus's daughter, on the woman with the issue of blood, on the daughter of the woman of Canaan, and on Lazarus. 'I brought him to thee, but after four days He came, I know not how, either thou wert asleep or wert busy elsewhere, and He took him from thee.' [1]

Hades replies: 'Is it He who took Lazarus? If so, have mercy on me, do not bring Him here, for He is great, His Voice has terrified me and destroyed my power. I am not able to bear His Voice,[2] and dost thou command me to shut Him up here? God forbid. Have mercy on me. I cannot receive Him here. If He comes, He will cast forth those in my keeping.' Then he describes how Lazarus' body became corrupt, and how Christ came to his door and called Lazarus forth. 'He sprang forth from my belly, as a lion swift from a den on its prey, as an eagle he leaped forth, all weakness laid aside in the twinkling of an eye.' [3]

The devil says: 'Timid, unmanly, and small of soul! He

[1] This section corresponds to c. 4, §§ 1, 2 of *Nicod.*

[2] Cf. Ephrem Syrus, Hymn 36, and *Acts of Thomas*, c. 10, pp. 112, 140, *supra.*

[3] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 4, § 3, which tells how Lazarus flew away or leaped forth like an eagle.

has wrought me so many evils and I have not left the world, nor ceased to fight men, and thou, suffering evil of Him, art thou so cast down? When I saw that He healed bodily weaknesses, I began to injure men's souls through my works.' The examples given of this are Matthew, filled with the desire of riches, whom Christ called and he followed Him, to the grief of the devil; Zaccheus, whom Christ drew from him also, and many others. 'Then I remembered my old friends, and arising I went to my old friends, the Jews,[1] whom of old I taught to worship the calf. I remembered their disposition towards me, and going to them I enraged them and their elders against Him. Be not afraid: only prepare a safe place and we shall shut Him in.'

Hades replies: 'I have not hearkened to thy evil words about Him. Withdraw from Him, be not eager to bring Him here, I am not able to receive Him. What hast thou to do with Him? What is there common to the kettle and the pot? He will break thee in pieces.' If He has so overcome the devil's wiles, why should he bring Him here? 'He will take away all my hopes and make me hopeless like thee. Except He were the Son of God, he could not do these wonders. If He were only a man, He could not heal bodily ills, much less cause sinners to repent, etc.' 'Well do I know what the prophets say of Him, and how they whom I shut up expect Him with joy. I know what John, when he came, announced of Him, and I fear to receive Him here.'[2]

The devil says: 'All these lie, in order to terrify thee.' Hades answers: 'They do not lie in what they have said of thee. For He that is called Jesus hath done to thee what the prophets foretold, just as thou thyself hast confessed.'

[1] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 4, § 2, 'I set on the Jews' (Gk.); 'I stirred up my ancient people the Jews' (Lat. A).

[2] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 4, § 2 (Lat. A), 'If He be so mighty in His Manhood, truly I say to thee He is mighty in His godhead.'

The devil replies: 'Great are thy powers, and insatiable is thy belly, which no one is able to fill, and art thou not able to receive one man?'[1]

Hades: 'Talk no more nonsense! All are leaving thee, all run to Him. You are deserting me and becoming His friend.'

The devil: 'Thou hast swallowed the whole world, and dost not say, Enough![2] Thou hast received Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all the prophets, and wert not afraid, and now for one man, my enemy, thou art afflicted and dost not wish to receive Him. I am persuaded that He is a man fearing death, for now when He knew the hour of death to be near to Him, fearing death and grieving, He said: My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.'[3]

Hades: 'I have not seen Him, nor do I wish to see Him. But He spoke such dissembling words that thou mightest approach Him, and worse shall be thy fate. Woe to thee, wretched one! Wishing to deceive thee, He spoke these words. Depart from Him, and wish not to fight with Him.'[4]

The devil: 'I have my powerful servants, and I am not afraid to fight with Him. They are of one mind with me, especially Annas, Caiaphas, and Judas; these are my fellow-heirs. We have also the multitude of the Jews with us, and we can do whatever we wish against Him. Only do thou receive Him.'

Hades: 'Go and do as thou wilt. Wage battle, and if thou overcome Him, we shall shut Him up here, and thou shalt reign over the Jews. But if thou art conquered, He cometh

[1] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 4, § 2 (Gk.), 'O thou Hades, that devourest all and art insatiable.'

[2] In *Nicod.* c. 4, § 3, Hades himself says that he has swallowed up all from the beginning.

[3] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 4, § 1, 'I know that He is a man, etc.'

[4] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 4, § 1 (Lat. A), 'When He saith that He feareth death, He would ensnare thee, and woe shall be to thee for everlasting ages.'

and casteth out whom I have shut up,[1] and then He will bind thee and thy servants the Jews, and will deliver you to me, and with you we shall be wretched.'

Having heard these things, the devil returned to the Jews and incited them against the Lord.[2]

The Homily, 'On the Passion, for the Preparation Day,' after a brief account of the betrayal, arrest, trial, and scourging of our Lord, proceeds: 'He was crucified on the tree, that He might take away the sin caused by the tree. For through the tree Satan expelled Adam from Paradise, and through the tree the Lord displayed the city of Paradise to the thief. On the sixth day the Lord formed Adam, and on the sixth day he was cast out of Paradise. Therefore on the sixth day the Lord opened Paradise and led in the thief.'[3]

When the devil saw all things done *κατ' οἰκονομίαν*, the signs done on the Cross, the earthquake, etc., and himself deceived, he fled to Hades and said to him: 'Woe is me, miserable, I have been deceived, help my weakness: let us shut the gates lest He enter here!' Hades ran and closed the gates and made firm the iron bars.[4] And behold the Lord cometh to Hades, pursuing the devil, and the Powers (*i.e.* angels, cf. 2 Thess. i. 7, 'angels of His power') ran before Him. The doors being closed, the Powers cried: 'Lift up your doors, ye princes, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.'[5]

[1] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 4, § 3 (Lat. A), 'If thou bring Him unto me, He will set free all that are here, etc.'; (Gk.), 'If thou bring Him hither, not one of all the dead will be left in me.' Cf. c. 8, § 1, 'With that He cast them all forth.'

[2] Migne, *PG* lxxxvi. 1, 383 ff.

[3] Cf. Irenæus, v. 23. 2: 'The Lord, in obedience to the Father, endured death on the same day (the sixth) in which Adam died, disobeying God.' For the twofold tree, cf. *Nicod.* c. 7, and see also Additional Notes, 11.

[4] In *Nicod.* c. 5, § 1, Hades orders his servants to shut the gates.

[5] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 5, § 1, a Voice cries, 'Lift up, etc.' Hippolytus, on Ps. xxiv. 7, says that angels ran before Christ on His ascent to Heaven. See Additional Notes, 5, for angels with Christ in Hades.

Hades said to himself: 'Who is the King of Glory?' The Powers answered: 'The Lord of Powers, He is the King of Glory.' Hades said: 'Who is this whom ye speak of? And if He is such, what seeks He here? Why has He left Heaven and descended here?' The Powers replied: 'Because He is the King of Glory He has come to bind him who for rebellion was condemned, to deliver him to thee, and to draw out and recall His soldiers from thee.' [1]

Hades said to the devil: 'Three-headed Beelzebub, cast out by angels, the mockery of saints, weak, hidden from the light, did not I tell thee—Do not fight with Him? What I foretold has happened. What art thou to do, wretched one? Why didst thou not listen to my words? Lo, He has come to seek and bind thee, and through thee I am a prisoner. Go out, if thou canst, and resist Him, for I am not able to aid thee.' [2]

The devil cried: 'Have pity on me for a time! Do not open. Sometimes He is turned aside. For a time fight for me, for I have been deceived. Who would not be deceived by His words (*i.e.* My soul is exceeding sorrowful, and, Father, if it be possible), which enticed me?'

The Powers repeat the command, 'Lift up your gates!' The prophets, hearing the voice of the King of Glory, rejoiced and exulted. John said: 'Did I not say that He cometh to cast us forth?' All rejoiced and said to Hades: 'Open thy gates, and the King of Glory will come in.' Hades refused. David said: 'Let him be. Did not I when on earth foretell that he would not open willingly, saying: "The Lord who breaketh battles, the Lord hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder"?' (Pss. lxxvi. 3, cvii. 16).[3]

[1] *Nicod.* c. 5, § 3, is closely parallel to this, angels replying to the question of Hades (Gk., but in Lat. A, David).

[2] Hades addresses the devil in similar scornful terms in *Nicod.* c. 7 (Gk. and Lat. A), and in c. 5, § 1, bids him go out and resist Christ.

[3] *Nicod.* c. 5, § 2, is parallel to this.

And immediately the Lord approached and crushed the doors and broke the bars, trod down the powers of Hades, loosed the pains of death, and destroyed the stings of Hades, fulfilling what was written: O Hades, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting? [1]

The prophets went to meet Him, rejoicing and saying: 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest.'

Then the Lord, taking the devil, bound him with indissoluble bonds and led him down to the lowest parts of Hades, and scattered fire unquenchable, undying worms, and there he is enclosed, weeping and groaning.[2]

Then the Lord, taking all the prophets, thrust them forth out of Hades, saying, 'Go into Paradise.' And they rejoicing, sprang forth from Hades. First David, striking his lyre, said rejoicing: 'O come let us sing unto the Lord, etc. (Ps. xcv. 1), for our King has conquered for us in battle. And all answered, Alleluia. And again he said: O clap your hands, etc.' (Ps. xlvii. 1). And thus rejoicing they ran to Paradise.[3]

Entering it, they found the thief and were astonished, saying, 'Who led thee hither? Who opened the gates to thee? What has happened that thou hast entered before us? Hast thou come to steal here? to rob heavenly things? We do not grudge your entrance, but we inquire the cause.'

He answered: 'Not because of my deeds am I worthy to enter, but the merciful and gracious Lord led me here. I had nothing good, wherefore the Jews condemned me to death with

[1] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 5, § 3. [2] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 6, § 2.

[3] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 8, § 1, ἐξέβαλεν ἅπαντας ἐξω, with *Hom.* ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τοῦ ᾅδου. With the saints springing forth—ἐξεπήδησαν ἐκ τοῦ ᾅδου, cf. *Nicod.* c. 8, § 2, Christ took them and leaped out of Hades—ἐκ τοῦ ᾅδου ἀνέθορε. There are many resemblances between *Nicod.* c. 8 (Gk. and Lat. A) and this part of the Homily.

the Immortal King, and when they wished to kill me, they rather brought me to life, crucifying me with Christ. I saw the signs done on the Cross, and realizing that this was the Son of God, I cried : Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom. And He replied : Verily I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise. And He gave to me the sign of the Cross, saying : Take this and go into Paradise, and if the flaming sword forbids thee to enter, show to it the royal sign and it will open the gates to thee.' Then he tells how the flaming sword shut the gates against him, but on seeing the sign opened them. Entering, he found no one and was astonished, expecting to see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets. Then appeared two old men, who said : 'Who art thou ? Thou art not Abraham, for his form was that of a priest. Nor Moses, for his voice was gracious and his tongue slow, but thine is quick. Who art thou ? Thou seemest to be a thief.' Then he told them his story, and asking who they were, was told that they were Enoch and Elijah.[1]

Hearing these things, the prophets glorified God, who had given such gifts to sinful men. But the Lord, who spoiled Death, trampled on Hades, and healed the tree by the tree, broke the gates, shattered the bars, bound the devil, and set the world free ; having risen from the dead, He carried up all into Heaven.[2]

The relation of these Homilies to the *Descensus* story in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* has been variously regarded. Maury maintained that the story was a compilation from the Homilies and from similar notices of the Descent. But most students have found the Homilies dependent upon the *Descensus* story

[1] In *Nicod.* c. 9, 10, the saints, entering Paradise, first meet Enoch and Elijah ; then appears the robber and tells his story in much the same way as in the Homily, several of the phrases being expressed in the same words, especially in Latin A.

[2] Migne, *PG* lxii. 721 ff. Part of the Homily is also given in lxxxvi. 1. 404.

—Thilo, Tischendorf, Lipsius, and von Dobschutz. Lipsius says that Eusebius used and paraphrased it, and both he and von Dobschutz agree that the Greek text which he had before him was not the present recension, but one corresponding to that from which the Latin text A was translated.[1]

A comparison of the *Descensus* with the Homilies shows that the former is concise where the latter are diffuse, and supplies a complete and well-rounded-off story, balanced in the relationship of its parts. The one is literature, the others are rhetorical addresses. Examples of the diffuse aspect of the Homilies are seen (1) in the citing of their prophecies by the Old Testament saints. The occasion and the purpose differ in the two documents. In *Nicodemus* it follows on the appearance of the light in Hades, and is a natural expression of joy; in the Homilies the citations follow the Descent of S. John Baptist, and are intended to cheer those in Hades. They are limited to Isaiah and Simeon (Lat. A) or Abraham and Isaiah (Gk.) in *Nicodemus*; but in the Homilies there are several citations referring to the chief facts of our Lord's life.[2] (2) The dialogues of Satan and Hades are concise in *Nicodemus*, but far more elaborated in the Homilies.

There are some notable omissions in the Homilies, *e.g.* the incident of Adam, Seth, and the tree of life, and the emphasis laid on the rescue of Adam. The order of the incidents in Paradise varies: in *Nicodemus* the saints meet Enoch and Elijah first, then comes the thief; in the Homilies the thief is already in Paradise, where he finds Enoch and Elijah, and is then met by the entering saints.

Yet there is a general likeness between the two, both in the

[1] Thilo, *op. cit.* p. cxx; Tischendorf, *op. cit.* Prolegomena; R. A. Lipsius, *Die Pilatus-Acten*, Kiel, 1871, pp. 7, 45; E. von Dobschutz, in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, iii. 544.

[2] These suggest Origen's theory of many forerunners in Hades, preparing a people ready for the Lord's advent there.

outline of the story and in many details, while the use of similar phrases points to borrowing, as shown in the comparative tables appended to this chapter. All points to a use of the *Descensus* story by the author or authors of the Homilies, unless both are using a common document now lost, or a group of traditions of the Descent, many of which are found in second and third century writers. This would account for the likenesses and differences in the two sets of documents—*Descensus* and Homilies. If use was made of a common source, it is, of course, enshrined in both.

The earlier traditions, which appear in both documents and which are found in earlier writers, are the appearance of S. John Baptist, the light in Hades, the terror of Hades, the deception of Satan, his stirring up the Jews against Christ, the use of Ps. xxiv. 7 f., the breaking of the gates, the rescue of Adam, the patriarchs, and prophets.

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE 'DESCENSUS' IN THE 'GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS' AND THE HOMILIES OF EUSEBIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

NICODEMUS.	HOMILIES.
	1
	The Homily, 'Art Thou He, etc.,' is not represented in *Nicod.*, save in the words of Lat. B, c. 5: 'I have received an answer from Him that He would Himself descend *ad inferos*.'
	Note also the reference to the presence of the prophets in Hades, and to the necessity for Christ's Descent, in order that those in Hades might *worship* Him (προσκυνήσωσιν).
Gk. c. 2: 'when ye behold Him ye shall *worship* Him' (προσκυνήσητε).	

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE 'DESCENSUS' AND THE HOMILIES—*continued.*

NICODEMUS.	HOMILIES.
	2
	Homily on John in Hades.
C. 2. John comes to Hades.	John the Forerunner appears and is recognized by the splendour of his light.
Cf. the light in Hades at the beginning of the story.	
Christ sent him to proclaim that He *cometh* (ἔρχεται).	He announces that Christ *cometh* (ἔρχεται).
With this cf. the citation of their prophecies by Isaiah, Abraham, Simeon, etc., when the light appears (or after John comes, Lat. B.).	He bids the prophets tell what they had foretold of Christ—David, Isaiah, Micah, etc.
Ibid.	Great rejoicing.
	Colloquy of Satan and Hades (see p. 175), in which there are parallel phrases to those in *Nicod.* ἔγνων ὅτι ἄνθρωπός ἐστι καὶ φοβεῖται τὸν θάνατον.
Gk. c. 4: οἶδα ὅτι ἄνθρωπός ἐστι.	
Lat. A, c. 4: 'He is a man that feareth death.'	
Gk. c. 4: ἐγὼ αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐφοβήθην.	οὐ φοβοῦμαι αὐτόν.
Gk. c. 4: 'I did set on the Jews (Lat. A, 'stirred up'), and they crucified Him.'	'For I shall enter into the Jews and rouse their nation, and they shall deliver Him to judgment and crucify Him.'
Gk. c. 5: Hades bids his ministers ἀσφαλισάσθη καλῶς καὶ ἰσχυρῶς τὰς πύλας.	'Meanwhile secure thy gates well' (ἀσφάλισαι τὰς θύρας ἐν πολλῇ ἀσφαλείᾳ).
	3
	Homily on the Devil and Hades (an enlargement of the colloquy of Satan and Hades in *Nicod.* c. 4).
Lat. A, 4 (cf. Gk.): 'He is a man that feareth death, and He sayeth, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, etc.	The devil heard Jesus say, 'My soul, etc.,' and believed Him to be afraid of death.
Gk. c. 4: ἔσο ἡτοιμάσμενος ὅπως ὧδε κατασφαλίσωμεν αὐτόν.	Satan—εὑτρεπισόν μοι τόπον ἀσφαλῆ ὅπου κατακλείσωμεν τὸν λεγόμενον Ἰησοῦν.

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE 'DESCENSUS' AND THE HOMILIES—*continued.*

NICODEMUS.	HOMILIES.
Lat. A, c. 4: 'I stirred up my ancient people the Jews . . . against Him. I have sharpened a spear to thrust Him through, I have mingled gall and vinegar to give Him to drink. I have prepared a cross to crucify Him and nails to pierce Him. And His death is near that I may bring Him to thee to be subject to thee and me.'	Satan—'I have prepared nails, sharpened a spear, mixed vinegar and gall. I urged on the Jews as bolts against Him. I made His disciple ready to betray Him. Only be thou ready (*ἕτοιμος*) to receive Him, for two days remain to Him, and I shall bring Him to thee.'
Gk.: 'Prepare thyself' (*ἑτοιμάσθητι*).	
Gk. c. 4: *ἐποίησε μοι καὶ πολλὰ κακὰ ἐν τῷ ἄνωθεν κόσμῳ.*	*πολλὰ γὰρ κακά μοι επεδείξατο οὗτος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.*
Gk. c. 4: *διὰ λόγου μόνου ἰᾶτο αὐτούς.*	*οὗτος ῥήματι ἰᾶτο . . . οὗτος λόγῳ ἐσφίγγετο.* Examples of miracles done by Christ (summary only in *Nicod.*). Satan refers to the raising of Lazarus.
	Hades: 'If it is He who took away Lazarus . . . *μὴ ἀγάγῃς αὐτὸν ἐνταῦθα.*'
Gk. c. 4: *μὴ ἀγάγῃς αὐτὸν ἐνταῦθα.*	
Gk. c. 4: *εἰ ὧδε ἀγάγῃς αὐτόν, οὐδείς μοι τῶν νεκρῶν ἐναπολευφθήσεται.* Lat. A.: 'If thou bring Him unto me, He will set free all shut up here.'	*ἐὰν ἐκεῖνος ἔλθῃ ὧδε, καὶ οὓς ἔχω ἐνταῦθα ἐκβάλλει.*
Lazarus: Lat. A, c. 4: 'Like an eagle shaking himself he leaped forth.' Gk.: *ὡς ἀετὸς ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ἐξεπέτασεν.*	The raising of Lazarus. 'He so sprang forth (*ἐξεπήδησεν*) out of my belly, as a lion . . . *ὡς ἀετὸς ἐξήλατο.*'
Lat. A, c. 4: 'I excited with envy and rage against Him my ancient Jewish people.'	Satan: 'I remembered my old friends, and arising, I went to my old friends, the Jews . . . and enraged them and their elders against Him.' . . . Only make ready (*ἑτοίμασαν*) a sure place where we may hold Him fast (*κατακλείσωμεν*).'
Gk. 4: *ἑτοιμάσθητε οὖν ὅπως ἐλθόντα κρατήσῃς αὐτὸν ἰσχυρά.*	
	Hades begs Satan not to bring Him here: *μὴ σπουδάσῃς αὐτὸν ἀγαγεῖν ἐνταῦθα.*
Gk. c. 4: *μὴ ἀγάγῃς αὐτὸν ἐνταῦθα.*	

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE 'DESCENSUS' AND THE HOMILIES—*continued.*

NICODEMUS.	HOMILIES.
Lat. A, c. 4: 'I know that that man who is able to do these things, is a god strong in command and powerful in manhood, and the Saviour of the human race.'	Unless He were Son of God, He could not do these wonders. If He were only a man, He could not heal bodily ills, much less cause sinners to repent.
Gk. c. 4: *παμφάγη καὶ ἀκόρεστε ᾅδη.* Cf. c. 5: the saints say to Hades: *παμφάγη καὶ ἀκόρεστε.* Hades: *πάντας γὰρ οὓς ἀπ' αἰῶνας κατέπιον.*	Satan: 'Great are thy powers and most insatiable (*ἀχόρταστον*) thy belly, which no one is able to fill . . . *τὸν κόσμον ὅλον κατέπιες.*'
Gk. c. 4: 'I know that He is a man, and I heard Him say, My soul, etc.' (Lat. A: 'He is a man that feareth death and sayeth, My soul, etc.')	'I am certain He is a man who fears death, for now when He knew the hour of death approaching, fearing death and sorrowing, He said, My soul, etc.'
Gk. c. 4: 'Mocking (*παίζων*) thee and laughing at thee He said this, willing to seize thee with a mighty hand, and woe, woe shall be to thee for ever.'	Hades: 'Woe to thee, wretched one. Wishing to deceive thee (*ἐμπαῖξαι*), He spoke these words.'
C. 5.: The Voice cries: 'Lift up your gates.' Hades bids Satan go forth and withstand Christ if he is able.	Hades bids Satan do as he will: go out and wage battle. If he is conquered, Christ will come and cast forth (*ἐκβάλλει*) those whom Hades has shut up. He will bind him and his servants the Jews, 'and will deliver (*παραδώσει*) you to me, and with you we shall be wretched.' Satan departs to stir up the Jews.
Cf. Gk. c. 8: 'With that He cast them all forth' (*ἐξέβαλεν ἅπαντας ἔξω*).	
Cf. c. 6, where Satan is delivered (*παραδοὺς τοῦτόν τῷ ᾅδῃ*) to Hades.	
	4
	Homily for Easter Eve.
Cf. cc. 7 and 8, references to the two trees.	References to the tree which caused sin and Adam's expulsion from Paradise, and the tree (of the Cross) by which sin was taken away and Paradise opened to the thief.

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE 'DESCENSUS' AND THE HOMILIES—*continued.*

NICODEMUS.	HOMILIES.
Cf. c. 5: The Voice: Hades orders his servants to shut the gates and bars.	Satan, aware that he is overcome, runs to Hades, and begs that the gates be shut. Hades ran and shut the gates and made firm the iron bars.
C. 5: A Voice as of thunder: 'Lift up the gates, etc.' (Ps. xxiv. 7).	The Powers cry: 'Lift up the gates, etc.' (Ps. xxiv. 7).
The Voice again: Hades asks: 'Who, etc.' The angels reply: 'The Lord strong and mighty, etc.' (Lat. A: David replies.)	Hades asks: 'Who is this King of Glory?' The Powers reply: 'The Lord of Powers, He is the King of Glory.'
Cf. c. 4, where Hades says that if Christ comes He will set free the dead.	Further questions of Hades, to which the Powers reply: 'He has come to bind him who for rebellion was condemned, to deliver him to thee, and to draw out and recall His soldiers from thee.'
Cf. c. 7: when Satan is delivered to Hades, he addresses him as 'Beelzebub.'	Hades addresses Satan in contempt: 'Three-headed Beelzebub, etc.,' and bids him go out and resist Christ, if he is able (ἔξελθε . . . εἰ δυνατὸς εἶ).
Cf. c. 5: 'Go out, if thou art able (ἔξελθε, εἰ δυνατὸς εἶ) and withstand Him.'	
C. 5: The forefathers bid Hades open the gates: ἄνοιξον ὅπως εἰσέλθῃ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης. (Lat. A: 'Open thy gates, that the King of Glory may enter in.)	The saints bid Hades open the gates: ἄνοιγέ σου τὰς πύλας, ὅπως εἰσέλθῃ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης.
Cf. Lat. A, c. 5: David cites Ps. cvii. 15, 16; and Gk. c. 5, where Ps. xxiv. 7 is cited.	David says, 'Let him be,' and cites Ps. lxxvi. 3, cvii. 16.
C. 5: καὶ εὐθέως ἅμα τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ αἱ χαλκαῖ πύλαι συνετρίβησαν καὶ οἱ σιδηροῖ μοχλοὶ συνεθλάσθησαν.	Christ approaches: καὶ εὐθέως προσελθὼν ὁ Κύριος τὰς πύλας συνέτριψε καὶ τοὺς μοχλοὺς συνέθλασε . . . 'Then was fulfilled what was written: O Hades, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?'
Cf. c. 5, Lat. A: Isaiah cites his prophecy: 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?'	

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE 'DESCENSUS' AND THE HOMILIES—*continued.*

NICODEMUS.	HOMILIES.
C. 6: Christ takes Satan, delivers him to the angels to bind him, and then delivers him to Hades.	Christ takes Satan, binds him with indissoluble bonds, and leads him down to the lowest parts of Hades, etc.
C. 8: Christ addresses Adam and the saints and puts them forth (ἐξέβαλεν). . . . He took them and leaped out (ἀνέθορε) of Hades.	Christ takes all the prophets and puts them forth (ἐξέβαλεν) from Hades, bidding them go to Paradise. Rejoicing, they spring forth (ἐξεπήδησαν) from Hades.
C. 8: Rejoicing of the saints. In Lat. A, David cites Ps. xcviii. 1, 2, to which the saints reply: 'Such honour have all His saints. Alleluia.'	Rejoicing of the saints. David cites Ps. xcv. 1, xlvii. 1. The saints respond 'Alleluia.'
C. 9: Christ takes Adam by the hand and delivers him with the saints to Michael. They enter Paradise, where they meet Enoch and Elias and talk with them. The thief approaches with the cross on his shoulders. He tells how he was condemned to die on a cross with Christ, and ἰδὼν τὰ γενόμενα σημεῖα he believed and said: 'Lord, when thou shalt reign, forget me not (in Lat. A as in Eusebius). Christ promises this and (Lat. A.) 'He gave me the sign of the Cross, saying, Bearing this, go to Paradise, and if the angel guardian of Paradise hinder thee from entering, show him the sign of the Cross and say to him that Jesus Christ now crucified sent me.'	The saints run to Paradise and enter. They meet the thief, who tells how the Jews crucified him with Christ. καὶ ἰδὼν ἐγω τὰ σημεία τὰ ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ γινόμενα cried: 'Remember me, Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom.' Christ promises this, 'and He gave me the sign of the Cross, saying, Take this and go to Paradise, and if the fiery sword forbid thee to enter, show to it the royal sign, and it will open to thee the gates.'
'When I had done this, I said to the angel guardian of Paradise all these things. When he heard these things from me, immediately opening he brought me in	'And I went, and straightway the fiery sword that guardeth Paradise, seeing me, shut the doors. And I said, The King of Glory, now crucified, sent me, and I

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE 'DESCENSUS' AND THE HOMILIES—*continued.*

NICODEMUS.	HOMILIES.
and set me at the right hand of Paradise.' The angel bids him wait a little, and Adam and the righteous will enter.	showed the sign of the Cross, and straightway he opened to me.' He enters and finds no one, and asks himself where Abraham and the saints are. Then appear Enoch and Elijah.
In Gk. the thief addresses Michael at the gate. The fiery sword, seeing the sign of the Cross, opens to him.	

The main parts of the *Nicodemus* story which are not represented in the Homilies are the Leucius and Karinus framework, the Seth story (c. 3), the questions of Hades to Christ (c. 6), the contemptuous address of Hades to Satan when he is delivered to him (c. 7), the meeting of the saints with Enoch and Elijah (c. 9). No mention is made of Adam.

CHAPTER XI

THE EASTER EVE HOMILY ASCRIBED TO EPIPHANIUS

The Homily for Easter Eve, ascribed wrongly to Epiphanius, is an interesting account of the Descent, especially for the stress laid on the rescue of Adam and Eve.[1]

After describing the Burial by Joseph of Arimathea, the Homily says that Christ did not burst the gates of the Virgin, but broke in pieces the gates of Hades. He went (*πορεύεται*, cf. *πορευθείς*, 1 S. Pet. iii. 19) to seek out Adam as a lost sheep. Certainly He wished to consider all who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, to loose captive Adam and his fellow-captive Eve from their griefs. He went to those dwelling in the tomb, whom as a tyrant, bitter and insatiable, Death swallowed.[2] Then follows a list of all those in Hades, from Adam to S. John Baptist, the greatest of the prophets, as in the dark womb heralding (*προκηρύττων*) Christ to all in Hades, the twofold forerunner (*ὁ διττὸς πρόδρομος*) and preacher to the living and the dead.[3] From the prison of Herod, he was sent to the common prison of Hades, of all who from the beginning had fallen asleep.[4] The prophets and all the righteous

[1] Migne, *PG* xliii. 482 ff.

[2] *ἀκόρεστος*, *κατέπιεν*, cf. *Nicod.* c. 4, § 1, c. 5, § 2, and Euseb. Alex., Hom. on the Devil and Hades, where the same words occur.

[3] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 2, § 2, Christ sent John to Hades *ἵνα κηρύξω*, and Eus. Alex., Hom. on John in Hades, where he is called *ὁ πρόδρομος*.

[4] *φυλακή*, cf. 1 S. Pet. iii. 19. The Hom. on the coming of John to Hades says that John ' came to those shut up in Hades ' (Migne, *PG* lxxxvi. 1. 511).

sent secretly and mystically unceasing prayers from thence, seeking ransom.[1] Then these prayers are cited in the words of Old Testament passages.[2]

Christ was to bring mercy not only to the men of His time and after, but to those detained in Hades before His advent—the idea of the theodicy, found elsewhere.[3] He appeared in Hades to souls freed from bodies in His divine and most pure soul not separated from His Divinity.[4] He, the Door (*θύρα*) destroyed the *πύλας ἀξύλους* with the *ξύλῳ* of the Cross, dissolving the indissoluble bonds like wax.[5] He descended with hosts of angels and archangels,[6] and their light-bearing presence took possession of the many-gated, gloomy, and eternal prisons of Hades. Gabriel outran all, to bear good tidings to men, crying with a mighty and leonine voice to all the adverse powers: 'Lift up your gates, ye princes!' Michael called: 'And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors.' The Powers said: 'Depart, ye unrighteous doorkeepers,' 'Fear, ye unjust tyrants.'[7]

Christ's unexpected coming to Hades as lightning blinded the adverse powers,[8] who heard the thunderous voices ordering the gates to be lifted from their foundations. 'Christ, the heavenly Gate, has come.[9] Make a way for Him that cometh through the deserts of Hades; the Lord is His name, whose are

[1] Cf. S. Athanasius, *de Sal. Adv.* p. 109, *supra*, and the Additional Note on Adam, p. 337, *infra*.

[2] Jonah ii. 2; Ps. cxxx. 1, xxxi. 16, lxxx. 1, 2, lxxix. 8, lxxxvi. 13, xxx. 3; Job xxxiii. 18.

[3] Cf. p. 101.

[4] Cf. Hippol. and Origen, pp. 96, 105, *supra*.

[5] Cf. *Odes of Solomon*, xvii., 'My own iron melted and dissolved before Me.'

[6] Cf. the Additional Note, p. 330, *infra*.

[7] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 5, § 3, Lat. A, 'a great voice as of thunder'; in Lat. B, c. 7, § 1, the Voice, 'as of a great thunder,' is that of Christ.

[8] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 5, § 3, Gk. and Lat. A, at Christ's Coming 'the dark places of Hades were enlightened,' or Christ 'lightened the eternal darkness.'

[9] Cf. p. 223, *infra*, for Christ as the Door.

the issues of the gates of death. Make ye the entrance, He has come to make the way out.' The fall of the gates is described, and the flight of the adverse powers, crying: 'Who is this King of Glory, who now does in Hades things never done before? Who is this who leads forth those who slept for ages?' The Powers reply: 'The Lord mighty in battle, who in the waters of Jordan broke the heads of your dragon,[1] who binds and sends you into the abyss. Hasten and lead out the bound whom ye have evilly swallowed down' (*κατεπίετε*). Some of the Powers demolished the prison and its foundations, others pursued the fleeing powers of Hades into the inner recesses, others ran hither and thither searching through (*διερεύνων*)[2] the descents, towers, and pits, others bound the tyrant with chains, others released the eternal captives, who were weeping and trembling at the coming of Christ to the lowest depths (*τὰ κατώτατα τῶν κατωτάτων*). Adam, the protoplast, in the innermost part,[3] bound in chains, heard the feet of the Lord coming to the bound, and recognized His footsteps. He announced this and the coming release to the others.[4]

The Lord entered, bearing the conquering weapon of the Cross.[5] Adam trembling cried: 'My Lord be with all.' Christ replied: 'And with thy spirit.' And taking his hand, He

[1] Cf. Ps. lxviii. 4, 20, Sept., and *Odes of Solomon*, xxii. p. 132, *supra*. Cf. also p. 231, *infra*. In *Nicod.* c. 5, § 3, the Powers reply to the question of Hades, 'the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.' The breaking of the heads of the dragon in Jordan refers to the terror inspired by Christ's Baptism among the spirits of the waters and the abyss. See p. 134, *supra*, and *Odes of Solomon*, xxiv. and xxii.

[2] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 9, § 2, Lat. B, 'the Saviour searched through *infernum*.'

[3] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 8, § 1, Adam says, 'Thou hast brought me up from the lowest Hades'; and cf. the similar references to Adam in Ephrem Syrus, pp. 113–14, *supra*.

[4] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 2, § 1, Lat. A, Adam, seeing the light in Hades, says, 'This light is from the beginning of everlasting light.'

[5] Cf. Ephrem Syrus, p. 114, *supra*, Jesus, carrying the sign of the Cross, went through Hades,

raised him, saying:[1] 'Awake, O sleeping one, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' . . . 'I say to those in bonds, Go forth, to those in darkness, Show yourselves, to those that sleep, Arise,[2] and to thee, O sleeping one, Arise, for I did not make thee to be bound in Hades. Arise from the dead—I am the Life of the dead. Arise, My image (*πλάσμα*), arise, My form (*μορφή*), who was made in My image.[3] Arise, let us go hence. For thou art in Me and I in thee, and in undivided person we exist.'

Christ then tells what He has done. 'Behold my hands fixed to the tree for good, because thou didst stretch forth thy hands to the tree for ill.[4] Behold My feet fixed and pierced through to the tree because of thy feet which ran evilly to the tree of disobedience on the sixth day, in which thy sentence was given and (in which) I won thy reformation and the reopening of Paradise.[5] Arise, let us go hence. The enemy led thee from the land of Paradise. I restore thee no more to Paradise, but to the heavenly throne. I hindered thee from eating of the typical tree of life, but behold I Myself, the Life, am joined to thee.[6] . . . Arise, let us go hence, from death to life, from corruption to incorruption, from darkness to eternal light . . . from prison to the heavenly Jerusalem, from cap-

[1] *καὶ κρατήσας αὐτοῦ τῆς χειρὸς ἀνίστησε*, cf. *Nicod.* c. 8, § 1, 'the King of Glory spread forth *τὴν δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ χεῖρα καὶ ἐκράτησε καὶ ἤγειρε τὸν προπάτορα Ἀδάμ.*'

[2] Isa. xlix. 9; Eph. v. 14. The passage from Isaiah is often cited in connexion with the Descent, *e.g.* by Cyril of Alexandria, p. 128, *supra*.

[3] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 8, § 1, Lat. A, 'Come unto Me all My saints who have My image and likeness,' and Ephrem Syrus, p. 114, *supra*, 'Adam . . . our image.'

[4] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 8, § 1, 'Come . . . as many as have suffered deat through the tree which this man touched, for I raise you all up through the tree of the Cross.'

[5] See p. 180, *supra*, note, for the sixth day.

[6] The idea is taken from that of the opening of Paradise and the gift of the tree of life (Christ), as in Jewish apocalypses.

tivity to the delights of Paradise, from earth to Heaven. For thee I died and rose that I might reign over the dead and the living. My heavenly Father expects the sheep that was lost.' Ninety-nine sheep of the angels waited for Adam, their fellow-servant, when he rose and went up and returned to God. The cherubic throne is prepared, the bearers swift and ready, the bride-chamber constructed, the meats ready, the eternal tabernacles and mansions ready, the treasures of the good opened, the Kingdom of Heaven prepared before the ages.

Saying such things, the Lord arose with Adam, who with Him is conjoined, and with them Eve,[1] and many other bodies which slept in faith from of old arose, proclaiming the Resurrection of the Lord on the third day.[2]

The writer of this Homily clearly knew the *Descensus* story in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and probably also the Homilies of Eusebius of Alexandria, as will be seen from the parallels in the notes. He may also have used the writings of Ephrem Syrus, with some of whose ideas he seems familiar. There are also some parallels with passages in the *Odes of Solomon*. It should be observed, however, that Hades appears as a much more gloomy and wretched place than in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and in patristic notices of the Descent.

A passage from a Homily ascribed to Cæsarius of Arles (468 to 542 A.D.) may be cited here as showing the rhetorical amplifications of the doctrine in the West. Its writer is obviously acquainted with the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. 'Immediately the eternal night of *Infernum* is lightened by Christ's descending. The noise of mourning is silent. The weight of the fetters is loosed. The bonds of the damned fall broken. The tormentors are amazed, thunderstruck. All the impious

[1] Cf. *Nicod.* c. 9, § 1, Lat. B, where Eve is mentioned, and Ephrem Syrus *Hom. on our Lord*, p. 115, *supra*.

[2] Cf. the Resurrection of the saints in *Nicod.*, and S. Matt. xxvii. 52–53.

guardians tremble when they suddenly see Christ in their seats. Immediately, as He descends, the dusky doorkeepers, in silence and blind with fear oppressing them, murmur: "What is that terrible multitude in snowy splendour? Why does our Tartarus not eject such? This is the Invader, not the debtor; the Breaker of the prison, not the sinner. We see the Judge, not the suppliant. He comes to command, not to obey; to break forth, not to remain. Where do you think our doorkeepers slept when this Warrior troubled our gates? If He were a prisoner here, He would not be proud and audacious. If they had blackened Him with any fault, never would He have dissipated our darkness with such splendour. But if He is God, what does He do in the tomb? If He is a man, why does He thus presume? If He is God, for what purpose does He come? If a man, why does He loose our captives? Is He to be compared with our father, or does He come to conquer him and so bring our reign to an end? Surely He was dead, surely He was conquered. Our leader was deceived in the world; he knew not that He would cause the overthrow of *Infernum*. The Cross falsifies our joys, and gives birth to our damnation. By a tree we were enriched; by a tree we are overturned. The power always terrible to mankind perishes. No living one ever entered here. No one ever terrified the executioners. Never in this place always black with soot and wretched with dark heat has light appeared." '[1]

Infernum is here a place of woe, darkness, and torment. These cease, however, on the appearance of Christ, as in earlier and later notices of the Descent.[2]

This cloud of witnesses to the doctrine of the Descent, whether theological or popular, shows that it grew rapidly from a simpler to a more complex form. If not strongly

[1] Cæsarius, in Thilo, p. 738.

[2] Cf. passages cited in Ussher, *Works*. iii. 300, and also Hilary, p. 126, *supra*.

emphasized it was, at least, a part of the apostolic kerugma. It began with the certain belief in the presence of Christ's soul in Hades, which, with His Resurrection, meant the overcoming of Death and Hades. To this was added the Preaching in Hades, and its results for some of those there who had waited for Christ—the Old Testament saints, or, if the Petrine passages are accepted, others also, as some later forms of the belief alleged. Possibly the Preaching may not have been very definitely stated at first, and more emphasis was laid on the transference of souls. But it is very early borne witness to. To these were added, as time went on, other elements of a more mythical kind—the further development of the overthrow of the Underworld and its powers, their terror, the breaking of the gates of Hades, the deception and the binding of Satan. These are seen fully in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, but they are found also in many of the other passages which have been cited.

To each of these elements of the Descent story we shall now turn our attention.

CHAPTER XII

THE DECEPTION OF SATAN

The *Gospel of Nicodemus* gives expression to the theory that Satan, believing Christ to be a mere man, is subject to deception through his own stupidity. Satan thought that Christ feared death, because He said : ' My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' and he caused His crucifixion. In vain Hades tells him that ' He would ensnare thee ' (Latin A), or ' this He said to mock thee and in sport, wishing to seize thee with a mighty hand ' (Greek). In the sequel, when Satan is overcome, Hades mocks him and says : ' Thou wouldst crucify the King of Glory, promising us great spoils through His death. Like a fool thou knewest not what thou didst.'

The Homilies of Eusebius of Alexandria pursue the same thought, but express it much more fully, while, at last, Satan, seeing all the signs at the Crucifixion, cries out : ' Woe is me, miserable, I have been deceived,' and seeking help from Hades, adds : ' Who would not have been deceived by such words ; for when, fearing death, He said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and when He prayed to the Father, saying, If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me, these words enticed me.'

The Hymns of Ephrem Syrus contain the same thought regarding Satan's belief that Christ is but a man, and his consequent discomfiture. It is also connected with the Marcionite teaching about the Descent.

In some accounts of the Descent Death, not Satan, is deceived.

Cyril of Jerusalem says that Christ's Body was a bait to Death, that he, lying in wait to devour Him, might cast forth those whom he had devoured. This underlies the words of the *Odes of Solomon*: 'I have been gall and bitterness to Death: Death cast Me up and many along with Me.' The *Acts of Callistratus* speak of Christ's veiling His Godhead in His Descent, and thus robbing Hades. The *Book of the Resurrection* suggests also a deception of Death, as does the Mystagogia in *Testamentum Domini*: 'Death, when it saw Him descending in His soul to Sheol, was deceived and hoped He was his usual food.'

Apart from the doctrine of the Descent, a deception of Satan is connected by some of the Fathers with the alleged rights of the devil over man. Man sinned and became Satan's lawful prey, and in strict justice must not be taken from him by force. A ransom was necessary, and that ransom was Jesus Christ. This was sometimes joined with the idea that the devil was outwitted, not knowing Who the ransom was. Christ escaped from his clutches, spoiling the spoiler of his prey. The doctrine in this form appears as one of Origen's speculations about the Atonement, but the idea of a deception of Satan was known before his day, though apart from that of the ransom.

Along with a hiding of the Incarnation from the angels, it appears in the Vision sections of the *Ascension of Isaiah*, which date from the end of the first century A.D., though there it has a docetic aspect. In descending through the Heavens to earth, Christ took the form of their angels so that His Descent was hid from them. The Virgin-birth escaped their notice and that of the princes and gods of this world. Hence, though this is not expressly stated, the adversary who envied Christ and caused the Crucifixion was conquered.[1]

A similar thought appears in the *Epistle of the Apostles*.

[1] See p. 137, *supra*.

Christ passes by the archangels and angels, among the princedoms and powers, in their likeness as if He were one of them. 'I became an angel among the angels, and I became all things in all.' Christ then, in the form of Gabriel, announces the Incarnation to the Virgin, and entering her becomes flesh.[1]

We shall return to these two passages. While protesting against an unreal Incarnation, Ignatius taught that Christ's Humanity was real, and its very reality caused His Divinity not to be recognized. 'Now the virginity of Mary and He who was born of her were kept in secret from the Prince of this world, as was also the death of our Lord: three mysteries of shouting, yet done in the silence of God.'[2] The deception is here rather to be inferred, and we have the unusual idea that the death was kept secret from the devil. Dr. Charles thinks that Ignatius is here borrowing from the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and that he is referring to what was already a well-known doctrine.[3] The words of Ignatius were often cited by those who developed the deception-ransom theory.

A passage in the *Testament of our Lord* runs: 'He came into the Virgin's womb, hiding Himself from all the celestial armies, and put the adverse hosts in ignorance.'[4] Thus both the heavenly hosts and the evil angels (as in *Ascension of Isaiah*) are ignorant of the Incarnation. The ignorance of the angels is mentioned by Ambrose and others.

The hiding of the Incarnation from the devil is sometimes connected with the idea of a painless birth. Thus in the *Odes of Solomon* the Virgin is said to have 'brought forth a Son

[1] *Epistle*, cc. 13, 14, in C. Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 48 f.; and James, *op. cit.* p. 489.

[2] Ignatius, *ad Ephes.* 19. Cf. a Christian interpolation in the *Testament of Asher*: 'the Highest looked on the earth, and He came as Man, eating and drinking with men, and in silence (secret) breaking the head of the dragon in the waters . . . God hidden in man.'

[3] Charles, *Ascen. of Isaiah*, p. 77.

[4] *Test. of our Lord*, i. 28.

without incurring pain,' and did not seek a midwife. Ephrem Syrus says : 'The pure Virgin suffered not,' and the Homily of Pseudo-Epiphanius on the Descent says that Christ did not break the Virgin's gates, but passed through the unopened seals of Virginity.[1]

Irenæus is fond of the thought of the victory of Christ's Humanity over the devil, but though he sometimes appears to regard Christ's death as a ransom paid to the devil for the souls enchained by him, and willingly accepted, there is no thought of a deception in this act of ransom, rather was it by persuasion. 'The Lord gave His Soul for our souls, His Flesh for our flesh.' He ransomed from the Apostasy 'the things that were His own, not with violence, as it ruled over us originally . . . but in a way of persuasion, as it became God to take to Him what He would by persuading, and not by force : so that neither that which is just might be broken through, nor God's whole Creation utterly perish.' [2]

Irenæus does not explain this further, nor does he say that the devil, in accepting the ransom, was unaware of the Divinity. But, speaking of the Temptation, he suggests a desire to hide this from him. 'To his saying, If Thou art the Son of God, He employed for the blinding of him the avowal of His Manhood,' *i.e.* by saying, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.' [3]

In Origen's speculation the two ideas of ransom and deception are combined. The ransom was paid by Christ to the devil for the souls who were his slaves, the devil demanding for them the Blood of Christ or His Soul as their price. An equivalent (*ἀντάλλαγμα*) was due to Satan to free men from

[1] *Ode* 19 ; *Select Works of Ephraim*, tr. J. B. Morris, Oxford, 1847, p. 115 ; Pseudo-Epiphanius, in Migne, *PG*. Cf. the *Protevangelium*, c. 19, 20, and *Ode* 28, 'I was not their brother, for My birth was not like theirs.'

[2] Iren. v. 1. 1. [3] Iren. *contra Hær.* v. 1. 1, v. 21. 2, cf. iii. 18. 7.

his power. The devil and the adverse powers were ignorant of the Incarnation, ignorant of the fact that they could not retain the soul of Christ—the ransom offered to them. Thus the devil, accepting the ransom, was deceived, thinking that he could hold it in subjection and not perceiving that it could be held only at the cost of what he could not endure. Christ was thus 'free among the dead, stronger than Death, and all overcome by Death could follow Him.'[1] Though Origen had other and better theories of the Atonement, this became a favourite with later writers, with whom the Incarnation hidden from the devil was the means of deception, some of them even speaking as if this deception had been the chief reason for the Incarnation.

Origen also develops the thought of the Incarnation having been hidden from the devil. Had the Virgin not been betrothed to a husband, the devil would have been aware of her virginity and that the Child was divine. But Christ had arranged that he should be ignorant of His having assumed flesh. He concealed this at His Birth; He forbade His disciples to make Him known; and in His temptation did not confess that He was Son of God. It was Christ's will that the devil should not know of the coming of the Son of God.[2]

S. Gregory Nazianzen is one of the first to use this deception theory after Origen. The devil, casting his hook at the Godhead, supposing himself to be the captor, was himself caught. The metaphor of the hook is used in a different way by other writers, beginning with S. Gregory of Nyssa. According to him, God's justice demanded that, as the devil has acquired men through sin, they should not be taken from him by force. A ransom is required, and the God-Man is that ransom. The devil, like a hungry fish, unaware of the hook within the bait, threw himself on the Man Jesus, thinking Him to be but a Man,

[1] Origen, *in Matt.* xii. 28, xiii. 8, xvi. 8; *in Rom.* ii. 13. [2] *Hom. vi., in Lucam.*

i.e. flesh which he had subdued through sin. He was captured by the hook of Christ's Divinity. He who deceived men was now deceived in his turn ; but this was for his good, for he will partake in the universal restoration.[1]

Macarius Magnes also develops this argument in his *Apocritica* (*c.* 400). The devil had seen so many proofs of Christ's Divinity that there was a likelihood that he would not again attack Him, and thus the Passion would not take place. Hence Christ pretended to fear death, and by deceiving the devil brought about the attack. Thus He baited the hook of His Divinity with the worm of His Humanity, as is written in Ps. xxii. 6, 'I am a worm and no man,' a passage cited in this connexion by Origen, and in Job xli. 1, 'Thou shalt draw out the dragon with a fish-hook.'

This doctrine became popular both in the East and West, some writers insisting on the ransom, some on the deception.[2] Pope Leo the Great (*ob.* 461 A.D.) teaches that the devil had rights over man which God recognized. Hence Christ became Man, and the devil was deceived by the Incarnation, and seeing Him living and acting as Man, he concluded that He was as other men. He set in force all his powers to persecute Him, finally slaying Him, and finding out too late that he had nothing to lay hold of in Him [3]—a statement which recalls the devil's account of his causing the Crucifixion in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, in Eusebius of Alexandria, and in Ephrem Syrus.

[1] Greg. of Nyssa, *Catech. Oratio*, 22–24, 26, 35.

[2] Rufinus expounds the hook-and-bait theory in his *Expositio Symboli*, c. 16, and adds : 'If a fish seizes a baited hook, it not only does not take the bait off the hook, but is drawn out of the water to be food for others, so he who had the power of death seized the Body of Jesus in death, not being aware of the hook of Divinity within it, but having swallowed it, he was caught forthwith, and the bars of hell being burst asunder, he was drawn as it were from the abyss to become food for others.' In support of this, Rufinus quotes Ezek. xxix. 4, 5, Job xli. 1, Ps. lxxiv. 14 (LXX).

[3] Leo, *Sermo* xxii. 3 f., cf. xvi. 1, lxi. 4, lxix. 3.

S. John of Damascus and Pope Gregory the Great both adopt the figure of the devil snatching the bait of Christ's Humanity and being caught on the hidden hook of His Divinity. Much later, Peter Lombard describes the Cross as a mouse-trap baited with the blood of Christ![1] A curious form of the ransom-deception theory is found in the *Acts of S. Eustratius*, where Christ is said to have put on the sheepskin (His Humanity) to lure on the wolf. For if God had struck him down, he would have said: 'I conquered man and was conquered by God.' As it was, he was too stupid to penetrate the disguise.[2]

In the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, Satan only discovers the deception when Christ descends to Hades as a conqueror. This is the logical outcome of the doctrine, but it is not advanced in so many words by the theologians.[3]

The kernel of the doctrine is that, hidden behind the veil of flesh is a deathless Nature, by which, in their hour of triumph, Death and Satan deceived are conquered. It was, indeed, almost a necessary corollary of the Incarnation doctrine, by those who did not believe in the omniscience of the devil. The devil was deceived because he could not believe in God's becoming Man. The veil of flesh hid the Divinity, and the devil was deceived, the deception in connexion with the ransom being intentional on the part of God, according to some of the Fathers. The perverted idea of the rights of the devil and of Divine justice in recognizing these, shows the essential dualism which influenced primitive and medieval theology. Remote as it is from our methods of thought and repulsive to our ideas

[1] John Damas. *de Fide Orthod.* iii. 27; Greg. *Moralia*, xxxiii. 7; Peter Lomb., *Liber Sent.* iii. dist. xix. 1.

[2] Migne, *PG* cxvi. 493.

[3] Cf. *Odes of Solomon*, xxviii. 8: 'They who saw Me marvelled at Me, for they supposed that I was swallowed up, for I seemed to them as one of the lost.'

of God, the germ of the doctrine might be found in S. Paul's words regarding the hidden mystery of which the princes of this world were ignorant, else they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. ii. 8). Their ignorance in crucifying One who was more than man led to their undoing; hence it might be concluded that this was a purposive deception, though this is not S. Paul's meaning. The same conclusion might also have been drawn from Heb. ii. 14. Christ took Human Nature in order that He might destroy him that had the power of death and deliver his captives.

We find the deception connected with the Descent in the teaching of the Gnostic Marcion or, more probably, in the development of his views by his followers. As recorded by Eznik, an Armenian writer of the fifth century, Marcion taught that the God of the law, indignant that his creature man deserted his worship for that of the gods devised by Hyle, the Power of the Earth, cast Adam into Hell with all his descendants to twenty-nine generations. Then the Supreme God, in pity for them, sent His Son to assume the form of a man, to heal the sick, raise the dead, and give sight to the blind. The God of the law, in anger, would cause His crucifixion. On the Cross He would become like one of the dead; then He would go down to Hades, which would open her mouth to receive Him, believing Him to be dead, for Hades does not admit life within her. He would then bring out the dead and empty Hades. All this was done, and the souls were taken to the Supreme God. The God of the law was enraged, and to him Jesus now descended in glory to judge him according to the *lex talionis* for causing His death. By that law he must die. He begged for mercy, saying that he killed Jesus in ignorance, not knowing Him to be a God, but it was given to Him to carry off all willing to believe in Him. Then Jesus left him, and revealed to Paul the purchase, *i.e.* that the Supreme God had

bought us with a price from the God of the law.[1] Marcion or his followers thus combine the doctrine of a purchase or ransom with that of the deception and the release of souls, and Marcion himself certainly taught that by Christ's death souls of men were bought from the Demiurge.[2] Origen's ransom theory was thus to some extent anticipated by him. In the Marcionite theory Hades is also deceived.

With the Marcionite myth may be compared the theory of some Valentinian Gnostics that Death took the dead body of Jesus, but the heavenly Soter, who had left the body, sent down a ray of his power, threatened and drove away Death, and so set the body free.[3] Bousset connects the Marcionite belief with the Mandæan myth of Hibil Ziwa, swallowed by the monster Krun, and so bringing to nought his power. There is not, however, any deception of Krun, since the hero distinctly states who he is.[4]

Traces of the deception theory are to be found in the Apocryphal Acts. The devils, in the Syriac *History of John*, say that Christ came down from Heaven, and their master did not perceive that He had come down. Christ became Man and died, and the devil, who here corresponds to the Demiurge, imagined that He was a mere man.[5] In a previous passage the devils describe how Christ overcame their master in fight. In the Syriac *History of Philip* the devil, as a black man, complains that Christ has deceived him by His many 'similitudes,' *i.e.* different forms assumed by Him, has slain him by His death,

[1] Eznik, *Against the Sects*, book iv. See the whole passage translated in art. 'Marcion,' *ERE* viii. 409.

[2] Tertullian, *adv. Marcion.* 5.

[3] *Excerpt. ex Theod.* 61. The Gnostic myth of man's creation by the Demiurge should be compared with these stories. Unknown to him a spiritual nature was given to man, and fear fell upon him and his angels at man's superiority to them. Clement, *Strom.* ii. 8.

[4] W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, p. 259. Cf. p. 26, *supra*.

[5] Wright, *Apoc. Acts*, ii. 45.

and has taken everything from him, leaving to him and his hosts nothing save the weeping and wailing and groans of the darkness.[1] So the dragon in the *Acts of Thomas* says: 'I am he who dwells in and holds the abyss of Tartarus, and the Son of God has wronged me against my will, and has gathered His own out of me.' A similar complaint is made by the demon in the same *Acts*, where he says: 'We thought that we should have brought Him under the yoke like the rest, but He turned and made us subject to Him. We did not know Him. He deceived us by His homely form, His poverty, and want. For when we saw Him we thought Him to be a man wearing flesh (*ἀνὴρ σαρκοφόρος*), not knowing that it was He who makes men live.' The docetic body was the reason of the deception and conquest. In the apostle's prayer Christ is called *ὁ πολύμορφος*, 'of many forms,' who overthrew the wicked one in his own nature (as if He had taken his form) and brought 'all His nature into one place'—a Gnostic idea, that of the drawing out of darkness the sparks of light akin in nature to the heavenly Christ.[2]

These conceptions are found also in a further Gnostic doctrine, namely, that the heavenly Æon Christ, in descending through the spheres of the Heavens to this earth, took the forms of their Rulers. He was 'transfigured and assimilated to powers and principalities and angels,' probably in order to escape their notice, according to the Simonians, or in order to empty them of their power, as certain Ophites taught.[3] In the *Pistis Sophia* (chapter 7) Christ takes the form of Gabriel and is thought to be that angel by the Archons. The Docetæ

[1] Wright, ii. 78.

[2] *Acts of Thomas*, cc. 32, 44, 47.

[3] Irenæus, i. 23. 3, i. 30. 12. In *Pistis Sophia* Christ wearing a robe of invisibility passed through the spheres. On it were the names of their rulers, who were rendered powerless through His knowledge of their names. This resembles the teaching of the Phibionites regarding knowledge of the names of the Archons by the descending Christ (Epiphanius, *Hær.* xxvi. 9. 10).

held that Christ contracted Himself into a small body, because the Archons could not bear the sight of Him who was the fullness of all the Æons, and arrayed Himself in a form to correspond with each of them. Hence He entered this world unnoticed, unknown, obscure, and unbelieved. During His thirty years on earth He appeared each year in the form of one of the thirty Æons, in order that He might be known to souls imprisoned in bodies, these souls being ideas from each of the Æons. Here the change of form is not to deceive but to aid.[1] The deception is found again in the Sethian doctrine of the Logos, who assumed the form of the serpent which had imprisoned Light in human bodies. To release the Light the Logos entered the impure womb in serpent form, and so deceived it because it could not recognize any other form.[2] The 'Hymn of the Pearl' in the *Acts of Thomas* tells how the king's son, having descended to Egypt (= this world), made his aspect strange and clothed himself like its people in order that he might not appear as a stranger. He may correspond to the Æon Christ of Gnostic systems, though some interpret the poem as a romance of the life of the soul.[3] We have already found similar transformations in Mandæan myths.[4]

A kindred conception is that of the docetic form of Christ's Humanity, as in Marcion, by which Christ's sufferings were only apparent, while His heavenly part left His phantom body, thus triumphing over the ruler of this world. The extreme form of this doctrine is that of some followers of Basilides, that the Æon Jesus could transform Himself as He pleased, and that He caused an exchange of forms between Simon of Cyrene and Himself. Simon was crucified and Jesus stood by mocking. Christ had descended and ascended in the mystic name Caulacau, which rendered Him invisible and incomprehensible to the

[1] Hippolytus, *Refut.* viii. 3.
[2] Hippol. v. 14.
[3] *Acts of Thomas*, c. 108 f.
[4] See p. 26, *supra*.

Archons, as the knowledge of this name also did to the Gnostic.[1] This and other examples already cited show the widespread belief in the magical power of the hidden name.

The deception idea, as found in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and in the *Apocryphal Acts*, is entirely in harmony with orthodox views. In Gnostic writings it has all the appearance of having been adopted from orthodox sources and exaggerated, possibly under Pagan mythical influences. The Marcionite conception, connected with the Descent, has some likeness to the account in *Nicodemus*, but in great part the deception is aided by Christ's phantasmal body and unreal death. We have seen that the idea might have sprung from statements of S. Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews, but the conception of Christ's restraining the beams of His glory in taking Humanity, of Incarnation as a hiding of Divinity behind human flesh, might easily give rise in speculative minds to the view that this was done deliberately with the intention of deceiving hostile powers. As found in the Fathers the conception has no obvious connexion with pagan myths. With the Gnostics it assumes a mythical form, whether as joined to a Descent through the spheres or into a lower region. A deception of the powers of the Underworld is found in Mandæan myths, and though it is claimed that in some such myth as these there is the source of both the Gnostic and the orthodox idea, this is most unlikely. The ultimate date of the Mandæan myths is not known, and they themselves may quite well have been based on Gnostic sources. There is no deception formula in the Babylonian Descent myths nor in others known in the ancient world.

The Gnostic description of the transformations of the Æon Christ when descending to earth through the spheres of the Archons, is found also in the account of the Descent of the preexistent Christ in the Vision sections of the *Ascension of Isaiah*,

[1] Irenæus, i. 21. 4 f.

and in the *Epistle of the Apostles*, as cited above. In both of these there is also an orthodox account of the Descent to Hades.[1] In both documents Christ, when descending through the Heavens to earth in order to take our flesh by becoming incarnate through the Virgin Mary, assumes the form of the angels of these Heavens or is 'in their likeness' or 'as if He were one of them.' Are their authors, otherwise generally orthodox, borrowing here from Gnosticism? This is unlikely. As Carl Schmidt has suggested,[2] the point of departure seems to be our Lord's words in S. John iii. 13: 'He that descended out of Heaven' (cf. ver. 31, 'cometh from Heaven,' and vi. 38, 'I am come down from Heaven,' cf. ver. 42). To these may be added S. Paul's words: 'The second Man is from Heaven' (1 Cor. xv. 47). The pre-existent Logos descended to become incarnate. With speculative minds the question would at once arise: 'How did He descend?' The answer was that He descended as one of the angels, so that they might not know Him. Why this should be is not explained. But we know from 1 S. Pet. i. 12 that the angels 'desire to look into' the whole scheme of salvation, and from Eph. iii. 10 that the principalities and powers had not before known the manifold wisdom of God, the mystery of redemption. These may have suggested the hiding of the descending Logos to become Incarnate from the angels, which is also referred to in the *Testament of our Lord*. Irenæus, the great opponent of Gnosticism, could himself speak of the Logos descending in an invisible manner so that He was not known, but when He became flesh He ascended visibly.[3] Both S. Ambrose and Firmicus Maternus, as we have seen, speak of the amazement or doubt of the angels when the Lord ascended, for

[1] Cf. the Mystagogia in *Test. Domini*: Christ 'descended into Sheol, who descended from the pure heights above the heavens' (Cooper and MacLean, p. 85).

[2] C. Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 283 f. I have partly followed his argument in this discussion.

[3] Iren. *Epideixis*, c. 84. Cf. 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'showed Himself to angels.'

they had been ignorant of His coming to earth. Cf. also the reference to this in Justin Martyr.[1]

Both in the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Epistle of the Apostles* we are moving in a circle of Jewish ideas concerning the various Heavens and the angels (Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael), who are not hostile, like the Gnostic Archons; and, in the *Epistle*, Christ puts on the Wisdom of God and wrought the likeness (of the angels) by it. Here we are still concerned with a Jewish conception, accepted in early Christian theology—that of Wisdom as a personified attribute of God, and so easily identified with the Logos (cf. S. Paul, 'Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God,' 1 Cor. i. 24, ii. 7), not the Gnostic Sophia.

In the *Epistle* Christ says: 'I became an angel among angels, and I became all things in all.' This is an echo of 1 Cor. xv. 28, 'that God may be all in all,' and ix. 22, 'I am become all things to all men.' Origen says: 'The Saviour, more divine by far than Paul, became all things to all men (*τοῖς πᾶσι πάντα*). . . . He became a Man to men, an angel to angels.'[2] (The reference here is to the Old Testament Theophanies, *e.g.* Ex. iii. 2, 6.) Irenæus, though here referring to the work of the Logos before the Incarnation, says that the Logos was He who became all in all, among the patriarchs a Patriarch, among the prophets a Prophet, among the angels an Angel, among men a Man. This resembles the account in the same writer's work on *Heresies*, where he speaks of Christ's being perfect in each stage of His life—an Infant among infants, a Youth among youths, an Elder among elders.[3]

If, as seems likely, the Gnostics took the same point of departure regarding Christ's coming down from Heaven, they developed it on different lines. The Archons, opponents of

[1] See Additional Notes, p. 333, *infra*.

[2] Origen, *Comm. on S. John*, i. 34.

[3] Irenæus, *Fragments*, in *Library of the Fathers*, Oxford, 1872, ii. 560; *adv. Hær.* ii. 22. 4.

the Supreme God, not the angels of Jewish belief, are rulers of the world-spheres: hence the Æon Christ takes other forms in descending, not to take flesh, but to an unreal Incarnation. In descending He uses seals, talismans, passwords, and the like, in order to pass through the gates of the spheres with their hostile Archons.

The resemblance between the passages in the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Epistle of the Apostles* on the one hand, and the Gnostic accounts of a Descent through the spheres on the other, is superficial. In the former, which may be regarded as reflecting orthodox speculation, the pre-existent Christ descends to earth to become incarnate through Heavens tenanted by angels, not the distinctively Gnostic Archons. But, as Harnack says: 'The Descent of Christ is a much-used theme, and one lying on the border-lines of ecclesiastical speculation.'[1] Orthodox and Gnostic could share in the same speculative ideas, while employing them in different ways. The *Epistle of the Apostles*, indeed, speaks elsewhere of Archons. Christ says: 'I have delivered you from all evil and from the authority of the Archons.' And to others who believe He will give them to come out of 'the prison and the fetters of the Archons' (c. 28). These fetter men's lives through sin (c. 21). Here the influence of Gnostic terminology may be seen. But it should be observed that, before the distinctive Gnostic sense of 'Archon' was established, the word was used of any ruler of spiritual hosts, whether good or bad.[2] As in this passage of the *Epistle*,

[1] A. Harnack, *Gesch. d. altchr. Litteratur*, ii. 578.

[2] Cf. Dan. x. 13, 20, 21, the angels of different countries are called Archons. S. Luke xi. 15, S. Matt. ix. 34, etc., 'Archon of the demons'; S. John xii. 31, 'Archon of this world'; Eph. ii. 2, 'Archon of the power of the air.' Cf. S. Paul's use of *ἀρχαί*, now good, Eph. i. 21, iii. 10, Col. i. 16, ii. 10, now evil, Rom. viii. 38, Eph. vi. 12, Col. ii. 15. In the *Ep. to Diognetus*, c. 7, God sent to men an angel or Archon. Justin, *Dial.* c. 124, describes the serpent as being one of the angels who fell, and, c. 36, he speaks of the Archons in Heaven, under God's appointment, who are called on to open the gates to Christ. They had apparently been unaware of His previous descent.

orthodox writers could speak of Christ overcoming hostile angels and setting men free from their enslavement and power. Thus Irenæus, interpreting 'Thou hast led captivity captive' (Ps. lxviii. 18), explains it as 'the bringing to nought the dominion of the disobedient angels'; and Tertullian says: 'The Lord ransomed man from the angels, the world-ruling powers, from the spirits of wickedness.' [1]

Returning now to the speculations regarding Christ's being seen in different forms, we find this emphasized in the *Apocryphal Acts*. Christ is seen as a Child, a Boy, a Man; now of great stature, now small. We hear of His 'many-shaped countenance,' His 'unity which has many forms.' He is 'the many-formed One' (ὁ πολύμορφος).[2] 'Every one of us, according as he could contain the sight, saw Him as he was able,' says S. Peter; and, speaking of the Transfiguration, he adds: 'I saw Him in such a form as I was able to take in.' An appearance of Christ is then described, some seeing Him as a comely old man, some as a young man, some as a boy.[3] Curious as this is, it but develops the idea that Christ became all to all. The differences of appearance were connected with the Docetic views of Christ's Humanity, and perhaps with wide-spread beliefs in shape-shifting. It also appears to have been a tradition, certainly of a speculative kind, but yet one which we can understand, that, as in the *Acts of Peter*, Christ was seen as each person could appreciate and bear what he saw. Origen mentions this tradition, and says that not only two forms were in Him, one according to which all saw Him, the other

[1] Iren. *Epideixis*, c. 83. Cf. c. 38, which recalls the passage of the *Epistle*: Christ 'brought to nought the darkness of the prison . . . as He broke the chains in which we sat bound.' Tert. *de Fuga in Persecut.* c. 12. Cf. also Iren. *Hær.* iii. 23. 1: 'God made him a captive who had led men captive.'

[2] *Acts of John*, cc. 82, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91; *Acts of Thomas*, cc. 48, 153.

[3] *Acts of Peter*, cc. 20, 21.

according to which He was transfigured before His disciples on the Mount, but He also appeared to each as each was worthy. He did not appear in the same manner to all. To some He appeared more simply and was known according to the flesh: to the perfect He was in the form of God. The Logos had the form of a servant to those learning the rudiments, so that they say, 'He has no form nor comeliness.' To the perfect He comes in glory, so that they say, 'We beheld His glory.' He appears to each as is expedient for each and according to the capacity of each.[1]

Whether Origen, in speaking of this tradition, is referring to the passage in the *Acts of Peter*, is uncertain, though Clement of Alexandria quotes a passage in the *Acts of John* regarding Christ's Body, now palpable, now impalpable, as 'related in the traditions.'[2] We may, however, presume the point of departure to be S. John i. 10–14. These 'traditions' show that to many, not only Gnostics, it was possible to hold a moderate Docetism and to believe that Christ was seen in different ways by different witnesses; in other words, He was 'of many forms.' Hence such an account as that of the many forms taken in descending through the Heavens or the spheres, whether orthodox or Gnostic, is intelligible.

That such documents as the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Epistle of the Apostles*, with their statements about the Descent through the Heavens, and such works as the *Apocryphal Acts*,

[1] Origen, *Comm. Series in Matt.* 100, *Comm. in Matt.* xii. 30, 32, 36. Fragment of *Comm. in Luc.*, in Migne, *PG* xiii. 1068, 1750, 1908. J. Neander, *Church History*, Edinburgh, 1847, ii. 291, says of this: 'There was for Origen but one Christ, who is *all*: but He appeared under different predicates, through different ways of intuition, in different relations to those to whom He revealed Himself, according to their different capacities and wants, and hence, either in His godlike majesty or in His human condescension.'

[2] Clem. Alex. *Adumbrat. in Ep. I. Joann.*, in T. Zahn, *Forschungen zur Gesch. des neutest. Kanons*, iii. 87; Migne, *PG* ix. 735.

in which so much is retained that is speculative if not Gnostic, could circulate freely in orthodox as well as unorthodox circles, goes to prove that there was a wide borderland of popular Christianity with ideas derived from the orthodox region on the one hand and from the unorthodox on the other.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BREAKING OF THE GATES OF HADES

The destruction of the gates of Hades described in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* is mentioned already by Tertullian, who speaks of Christ who 'has broken the adamantine gates of Death and the brazen bars of Hades.' Hippolytus is another early witness to this conception: 'He broke and destroyed the gates of Hades, and the iron doors and bolts were broken.'[1] This belief in the breaking of the gates became a favourite topic in references to the Descent, being mentioned frequently in theological and apocryphal writings.[2] The *Gospel of Nicodemus* naturally gives a vivid presentation of the episode—the fear and trembling of the warders and of Hades and Satan, the hasty shutting of the gates, the arrival of the Conqueror and His bursting open the gates, bars, and bolts.

The trembling of the warders of the gates or of Hades itself is specifically mentioned by Hippolytus: 'For this reason the warders of Hades trembled when they saw Christ'; [3] and it is also found in Athanasius (*de Virginitate* and *adversus Arianos*), Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, the *Odes of Solomon* (xlii.), Synesius,

[1] The passages from Tertullian and Hippolytus are cited on pp. 94, 96, *supra*.

[2] See the passages cited above from *Odes of Solomon*, Athanasius, *de Virginitate*, *Teaching of Addai*, Ephrem Syrus, Prudentius, Firmicus Maternus, Aphraates, Ambrose, Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew*, *Epistle of Pilate*, *Book of the Resurrection*.

[3] Hippol., Fragment from *Comm. in Lucam*, in A. Mai, *Script. vet. Collectio nova*, ix. 645.

Hilary, Pseudo-Epiphanius, and Eusebius of Alexandria, as well as in the creeds of Niké, Sirmium, and Constantinople. It is much elaborated in the Homily of Cæsarius of Arles.[1]

How far are these incidents derived from Pagan conceptions ?

The belief in the Underworld in many Pagan mythologies shows that it was regarded as a vast enclosure with gates and bars carefully guarded. The rulers of the Underworld held their prisoners safely behind these walls and gates. The Babylonian Aralu had gates with bolts, fourteen or seven in number, and a warder stood at the outer gate.[2] The Egyptian Other World was also plentifully supplied with gates. Duat or Hades, through which the boat of Ra travelled by night, had twelve divisions and as many fortified pylons with closed doors and serpent guardians, or gates with other keepers. Those who knew the true magic formulæ could cause these doors to open and so obtain entrance.[3] The classic Hades and Tartarus had also their gates, those of Tartarus being of iron with a bronze threshold. Cerberus guarded the gate of Hades ; a hydra with fifty gaping mouths that of Tartarus.[4] In Mandæan mythology, the seven lower worlds of the dark powers have doors which can be made secure by magic spells and talismans. These, however, are not abodes of the dead. The faithful after death ascend through the spheres of the planets to the Kingdom of Light : souls of evil men and unbelievers are imprisoned in these spheres or ' stations,' which also have gates and warders.[5]

[1] See these passages cited, *supra*.

[2] Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 301, 435, 523, 549, 569 ; Sayce, *op. cit.* p. 79.

[3] Maspero, *op. cit.* i. 377, 381 ; ii. 27 ff. ; E. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, London, 1904, i. 170, *Book of the Dead*, ch. 147 f.

[4] *Iliad*, viii. 15 ; *Æneid*, vi. 576. Cf. the portals of the Scandinavian Hel, *Prose Edda*, tr. A. C. Brodeur, New York, 1916, p. 74.

[5] Brandt, *Mand. Schriften*, pp. 147 ff., *Mand. Religion*, p. 74, ' Mandæans ' in *ERE* viii. 388.

The Hebrew Sheol had also gates and bars, and Gehenna had seven divisions with as many doors.[1] Serpent-like guardians of the gates of Gehenna are mentioned in the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (xlii. 1). The Jewish tradition of the gates of the Underworld was inevitably passed on to Christian thought, while converts from Paganism or those familiar with classical literature would mingle the old Jewish belief with their own knowledge of the Pagan Underworld. Gates of brass, bars of iron, bolts, keys (Rev. i. 18), and warders of Hades are familiar in early Christian eschatology. Had not Christ Himself said of His Church that the gates of Hades would not prevail against it ?[2]

We have already seen how Ištar threatens to break down the gates of Aralu if she is not admitted, and to release the dead.

'Open thy gate that I may enter.
If thou dost not open the gate, if thou refusest me admission,
I will smash the door, break the bolt,
I will smash the threshold, force open the portals,
I will raise up the dead to eat the living,
Until the dead outnumber the living.'[3]

In the Mandæan myth of Hibil Ziwa's Descent, nothing is said of his destroying the gates of the lower worlds as he enters. His purpose was to enter by stealth, but, as has been seen, he sealed up the gates as he returned. Nevertheless, to the Babylonian myth of Ištar and to a supposititious form of Hibil Ziwa's Descent, the Christian conception of the breaking of the gates and the release of souls has been traced, *e.g.* by Pfleiderer. 'What Ištar only threatened to do is now really performed on

[1] Job xvii. 16, xxxviii. 17 (Sept.); Ps. cvii. 18; Isa. xxxviii. 10 (in Sept. 'gates of Hades'), cf. S. Matt. xvi. 18; Prov. vii. 27; Wisd. xvi. 13; 4 Esd. iv. 7; Ps. of Sol. xvi. 2; Gfrörer, *op. cit.* ii. 45–46.

[2] Cf. Köhler, 'Die Schlüssel der Petrus,' *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, viii. 222 f.

[3] Jastrow, p. 569.

behalf of the good spirits by Hibil Ziwa, the heroic ambassador of the gods—the gates of the Underworld are broken, the dead are delivered from their prison. Thus the Mandæan myth forms the transition from heathen to Gnostic Christian conceptions of an allied character.'[1] So far from this being true, Hibil Ziwa bursts open no gates nor does he deliver the dead. There are no dead in these dark Underworlds, for as yet man has not been created. What Brandt's translation of the documents relating to this Descent and his own summary of it show is described in his own words : 'Through the Descent of Hibil Ziwa the establishment of Earth, suited to be the dwelling of the human race, is made possible in the region of the Black Water. This conception of the scene of our existence and the conditions under which it has been prepared makes clear the position of a human race animated with souls from the World of Light. They dwell in a prosperous creation favourable to their well-being, but none the less incessantly surrounded by demoniac powers.'[2] Brandt considers that the Babylonian myth was used by the Mandæans, but turned to a philosophic purpose, and that the Gnostics also used it as the basis of their allegory of the Descent of the Saviour out of a heavenly region to save souls imprisoned in matter. Be that as it may, neither the Babylonian nor the Mandæan myth need be called upon to explain the Christian doctrine of the Descent, or the episode of the breaking of the gates.

The idea of gates of Hades was already found on Jewish soil, and Christian thought and imagination, familiar with this idea, whether from Judaism or classical mythology, and believing that Christ descended to Hades as a conqueror, easily conceived Him, whether literally or metaphorically, as breaking

[1] O. Pfleiderer, *The Early Christian Conception of Christ*, London, 1905, p. 100.

[2] Brandt, *Mand. Religion*, p. 191, cf. *Mand. Schriften*, pp. 147 ff.

down these gates, and found evidence for this in their interpretation of certain Old Testament passages. A prophecy of the return from exile in Isa. xlv. 2, and a reference to its consummation in Ps. cvii. 10 ff., speak of the land of exile as a strong prison-house, and, in the latter passage (ver. 10) this prison might be regarded as equivalent to Sheol—'such as sit in darkness and the shadow of death.' The passage in Isaiah (ver. 3) concludes with the words: 'I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places,' which were later regarded as foretelling the release of souls ('the treasures') from Hades. In Isaiah, ver. 2, are the words: 'I will break in pieces the doors of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron,' and in the Psalm, ver. 16: 'For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.' Thus the phraseology in which the breaking of the gates of Hades is described already lay to hand in the Old Testament, and is, in fact, cited by several of those writers who speak of it. Tertullian, who is the first to refer to this, cites the words of the Psalm with the additions 'of death' and 'of Hades': 'He hath broken the adamantine gates of death, and the brazen bars of Hades'—the differences in the quotation, 'adamantine gates,' 'brazen bars,' being possibly already found in the Latin version used by Tertullian.[1] Even in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* the episode is introduced by verses of Ps. xxiv. 7 f.: 'Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in,' and again, 'Lift up the gates.' Hades asks: 'Who is this King of glory?' The angels answer: 'The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.' Then follows the destruction of the gates,

[1] Tert. *de Resur. Carnis*, 44. Cf. Athanasius, *de Virginitate*, c. 16, 'brazen gates,' 'adamantine bolts.' There may be a classical colouring here. Virgil speaks of the columns of solid adamant of the gates of the Underworld, *Æn.* vi. 551.

which are still 'the gates of brass' broken in pieces and 'the iron bars' ground to powder, of Psalm cvii. and Isaiah xlv.[1]

From such passages of Psalmist and Prophet, as well as from the accepted belief in gates of the Underworld, and from the dramatic situation to which the conception of the Descent lent itself in the imagination of preacher or writer, the episode of the breaking of the gates by Christ is sufficiently derived, without going further afield.

The trembling and fear of the warders of the gates or of Hades itself, referred to by Hippolytus and others (see p. 96, *supra*), is also derived from Scriptural sources, namely, the Septuagint version of Job xxxviii. 17, *πυλωροὶ δὲ ᾅδου ἰδόντες σε ἔπτηξαν*, and the passage is sometimes cited verbally or nearly so by those writers who speak of this incident.

In some references to the Descent a mere opening of the gates takes the place of the breaking episode. In the *Odes of Solomon* (xlii.), the dead, seeing Christ in Hades, ran to Him, saying: 'Open to us the door, through which we may go out to Thee, for we see that our death does not touch Thee'; and in Ode xvii. we find: 'He gave Me the way of His going; I opened the closed doors,' though there is added: 'I broke in pieces the bars of iron.' So also the *Acts of Thomas* (c. 10), here, as in other passages, dependent upon this Ode, says: 'Who didst open the doors

[1] The Septuagint is followed in the citation of the Psalm. The description of Christ's entry into Hades in the Coptic *Book of the Resurrection*—the shaking of Amente, the overturning of the cauldron of fire, etc.—may be coloured by such an Egyptian myth as that of the entry of King Unas to the Other World—the heavens dissolved, the stars shook, the bones of the earth-gods shook with terror, and all in Amente fled in confusion. But cf. also the passages cited above from *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* and Cyril of Jerusalem. An earthquake is sometimes associated with the Descent, namely, that which occurred at the Crucifixion. The quaking of Hades is mentioned in *Nicodemus*, Latin B, c. 8.

and bring up thence those who for ages were shut up in the treasury of darkness.' [1]

In the *Teaching of Thaddeus*, not the gates, but the wall or enclosure (φραγμός) is broken through, possibly suggested by Eph. ii. 14, where Christ is said to have broken down τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, but pointing to the idea of Hades being enclosed by a wall.[2]

The gates being broken or opened, there is now a way for the souls to pass from Hades. This is spoken of in several interesting passages. Thus in the *Odes of Solomon* (xxii.): 'Thy hand has levelled the way for those who believe in Thee' (cf. xlii. above). Origen says that when Christ came to Hades He, as the Way and the Door, opened the way to Paradise.[3] Eusebius speaks of Christ's bursting the gates of Death's realm and making a way for the dead to return to life, a passage which is echoed in Aphraates: 'Our Redeemer divided Sheol and shattered her doors, and He went in into her midst and opened them and trod a way before all who believed in Him.' [4] In the Homily of Pseudo-Epiphanius the angels cry to the powers of Hades: 'Christ the Heavenly Door is come. Make the way to Him that hath trodden on the gates of Hades. . . . Make ye the entrance: He has come to make the exit.' The powers of Hades then ask: 'Who is this who leads forth those that slept?' [5] One of the references to the Descent in the *Acts of Thomas* speaks of Christ showing 'the

[1] This is more in agreement with Rev. i. 18, 'I have the keys of Death and of Hades,' than are the passages about breaking the gates.

[2] See p. 139, *supra*. Cf. *Acts of Thomas*, c. 32, where the enclosure (φραγμός) of Paradise is mentioned, and Origen, *contra Celsum*, vi. 25, where the Ophite account of the φραγμὸς κακίας, dividing the Heavens of the Archons from the region of the evil World-soul, is spoken of.

[3] P. 104, *supra*.

[4] Aphraates, *Hom.* xii. 8, see Dom Connolly, in *JTS* 1912, p. 301. Cf. Venantius Fortunatus. p. 129, *supra*, those rescued from Hades 'follow their Leader wherever He goeth.'

[5] Migne, *PG* xliii. 460.

way that leadest up into the height' to those shut up in Hades, and another says: 'Thou didst prepare a way, and in Thy footsteps all whom Thou didst redeem journeyed.'[1]

Christ, who makes this way out of Hades, is the Door and the Way, as He called Himself in S. John xiv. 6. 'I was the Door to everything,' says one of the *Odes of Solomon* (xvii.) which deals with the Descent. So Ignatius speaks of Christ as the Door by which all enter, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the prophets, etc.[2] In the *Shepherd of Hermas* Christ is the gate of the tower of which those taken from Hades form the stones.[3] As has been seen, the Homily of Pseudo-Epiphanius says: 'Christ, the Heavenly Gate, is present' in Hades, and it speaks of Christ the Door breaking the ἀξύλους πύλας of Hades with the ξύλον of the Cross.[4]

In connexion with the breaking of the gates of Hades, there is also the idea of Death or Hades being trampled on and destroyed, as we shall see in a later chapter, or of Hades being rent and uprooted. Ephrem Syrus speaks of the Conqueror bursting the graves one by one, as if these were in Hades, and of His 'uprooting Hades.' In the *Questions of Bartholomew* Hades says: 'My belly is rent, my inward parts are pained,' at the approach of Christ.

The last citation brings us to the conception of Death and Hades as insatiable monsters swallowing all the dead, but now forced to disgorge their prey. This is akin to the breaking of the gates and the deliverance of the captives—the two conceptions being sometimes combined. An early example of this is found in the *Odes of Solomon* (xlii.): 'Sheol saw Me

[1] *Acts of Thomas*, c. 10, 156.

[2] Ignatius, *ad Philad.* 9.

[3] *Hermas*, Simil. ix. 12.

[4] Migne, *PG* xliii. 456. Cf. *Acts of Peter*, c. 20, Christ is the Door, Way, etc., and *Acts of John*, c. 98, where the Cross of light is also called Door, Way, etc.

and was in distress. Death cast Me up and many along with Me.' The reason of this 'casting up' is then given—'I was gall and bitterness to it.' In Ode xxxi. Christ was not given to the abysses or their inhabitants for food, for He did not belong to them. Ephrem Syrus speaks of 'gluttonous death,' and of how Hades 'feasted on corpses,' but must now 'disgorge all I had eaten.' The 'insatiable belly' of Hades devours all mortals and decomposes all bodies.'[1] With these may be compared Satan's words to Hades in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*: 'O thou that devourest all and art insatiable' (*παμφάγε καὶ ἀκόρεστε*), and those of Hades: 'I have swallowed up all men from the beginning: behold, I perceive that they are unquiet, and my belly paineth me'; the parallel passage in Eusebius of Alexandria, where the devil says to Hades: 'Insatiable is thy belly, which no one can satisfy,' and that he has swallowed all the world; and the address of the angels to the powers of Hades in the Homily of Pseudo-Epiphanius: 'Hasten and lead out the bound whom until now ye have evilly swallowed down.'[2]

Cyril of Jerusalem, who also personifies Hades and Death, speaks of the rescue of all the righteous whom Death had swallowed, and Cyril of Alexandria's phrase, 'the insatiable recesses of Death,' contains the same idea.[3] Venantius Fortunatus speaks of the Ruler of the Underworld opening his jaws and vomiting the multitude whom he had swallowed.

In later Christian art, Hell is frequently represented as a monster with a yawning mouth into which souls are being driven. This is analogous to old Egyptian ideas, *e.g.* that of

[1] See the Hymns and the Homily on our Lord, quoted pp. 111–15, *supra*. Ephrem also speaks of Christ as 'the medicine of life' entering Hades and restoring life to its dead.

[2] *Nicodemus* (Greek), c. 4. In c. 5 the forefathers also call Hades *παμφάγε καὶ ἀκόρεστε*; Eus. Alex., in Migne, *PG* lxxxvi. 1. 400; Pseudo-Epiph., in *ibid.* xliii. 460.

[3] See these passages, pp. 127, 128, *supra*.

the huge serpent in the twelfth division of Duat, through which Ra and his company passed nightly, entering by the tail and emerging by the head. In the Gnostic *Pistis Sophia* this myth is combined with that of the twelve divisions of Duat. A huge dragon, with its tail in its mouth, contains twelve places of punishment. Sinners are thrust in by an opening in the tail of the dragon, which then replaces it in its mouth. The Greek *Apocalypse of Baruch* describes Hades as contained in or surrounded by a huge dragon, which devours the bodies of the wicked.[1] But, as far as this conception in the Descent story is concerned, the description of Sheol in the Old Testament as swallowing those who go down to it, is sufficient to account for this vivid piece of allegorizing. Indeed, any belief in an underworld whither all men go would easily produce a myth of a monster swallowing the dead. In Num. xvi. 30, 32, the earth opens her mouth and swallows Korah and his company. Here the personification is well nigh complete. We see it again in Ps. lxix. 15: 'Neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me: in Prov. i. 12: 'Let us swallow them up alive as Sheol'; and more particularly in Isa. v. 14: 'Sheol hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure, and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, descendeth into it.'[2] Contrariwise, Yahweh will 'swallow up death in victory' (Isa. xxv. 8), a metaphor effectively employed by S. Paul, 'Death is swallowed up in victory' (1 Cor. xv. 54). 'Swallow' is often used in the Old Testament in the sense of 'destroy.'

[1] Greek *Apoc. of Baruch*, iv. 3 ff., v. (in Charles' *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, ii. 535–36).

[2] Cf. Prov. xxvii. 20: 'Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied'; and 2 Bar. lvi. 6: 'Sheol kept demanding that it should be renewed in blood.'

CHAPTER XIV

THE VICTORY OVER DEATH AND HADES

The theory of Bousset that the original conception of the Descent was that of a fight between our Lord and the Rulers of the Underworld, including Satan, and that this was borrowed directly from mythical sources, is not borne out either by the earliest references to the Descent or by those which speak of a victory over Death and Hades. The earliest conception is merely that of Christ's presence in Hades and then His Preaching there. Where a victory over Death and Hades is spoken of, there is no thought of a contest: Death and Hades shrink in fear before Christ. Nor is Satan yet regarded as Lord of the Underworld. His rule is in this world, he reigns from the air, according to a well-known conception ('prince of the power of the air,' Eph. ii. 2).[1]

The earlier Fathers do not connect the passage in S. Matt. xii. 29, about binding the strong man, with the binding of Satan in Hades, probably for the reason that they did not regard Satan as Lord of Hades. Irenæus frequently quotes the passage, but refers it to the whole work of redemption. 'We were the strong man's goods and house, so long as we were in apostasy.' Christ binds the strong man and unbinds the weak by destroying sin. Christ wrestled and overcame, being as He was a Man contending for His fathers, and by obedience paying the debt of disobedience.[2] Mankind, summed up in

[1] See Additional Notes, 17.
[2] Iren. *contra Hær.* iii. 8. 2, iii. 18. 6.

the first man, Adam, God's image and likeness, were fulfilling the time of condemnation, but it would not have been fitting that the man made by God and hurt by the serpent should no more return to life. So God, first, put all on their trial, and then 'by the Second Man bound him that was strong, spoiled his goods, and abolished death . . . . Justly did God make him in his turn a captive, who had led men captive, and loosed from the chains of condemnation, man, who had been so led away.'[1] The power by which Satan bound man was transgression and apostasy. He being bound by the Lord, man is freed, and to him are left the chains by which man was bound, namely, transgression.[2] Though some of these passages might be interpreted of a release from Hades, this does not seem to be Irenæus' meaning, and elsewhere he connects the destroying of Death with the Passion.[3]

Origen explains the same passage thus: 'Christ emptied Himself and took the form of a servant, and suffered the domination of the tyrant, being made obedient unto death, by which death He destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil, that He might free those held by death. For having bound the strong man and triumphed in His Cross, He entered his house, the house of death, Hades, and spoiled his goods, *i.e.* He drew forth the souls which he held. This is what the Gospel speaks of enigmatically when it says, How can one enter, etc. First, He bound him on the Cross, and so entered his house, Hades, and thence ascending on high led captivity captive, *i.e.* those who rose with Him and entered the Heavenly Jerusalem. Hence the Apostle rightly says, Death hath no more dominion over Him.' 'The kingdom of death is destroyed and the captivity held by it taken away. But because the tyrant and

[1] Iren. *contra Hær.* iii. 23. 1. See Additional Notes, 18.
[2] *Ibid.* v. 21. 3.
[3] *Ibid.* ii. 20. 3.

enemy is still to be destroyed at the end of the world, therefore now we see him not so much reigning as robbing, and driven from his kingdom wandering through deserts and byways, seeking for himself unbelievers.'[1] By 'the strong man,' Origen seems to mean death, though he shows from Heb. ii. 14 that the devil has the power of death, and in another passage, where he gives the different meanings of the word 'death,' he says that the devil, author of death, is called death.[2] Whether Hades is Satan's house or not, the conquest of the devil takes place on the Cross. In other passages death is said to have detained souls in Hades.[3]

Hippolytus, in a passage which refers to the Descent, says that Christ, when hung upon the tree, declared man lord over his victor, and is thus proved conqueror by the tree.[4] According to S. Clement of Alexandria, Christ, wishing to release man from the bonds of sin, clothed Himself with flesh, vanquished the serpent, and enslaved the tyrant Death. Again, Christ, by His Passion, rescued us from sin, and, having destroyed the devil, deservedly said in triumph, 'O Death, where is thy sting?'[5]

Satan is not regarded as Lord of the Underworld in the Fathers, save perhaps by Origen; Death and Hades are there pre-eminent, and are conquered by Christ's death and His presence in Hades. But they are not described as opposing Him; rather they tremble before Him, so that they are overcome without effort. Their terror is clearly emphasized by most of the writers who describe the Descent in detail. The only exception to this is found in the passage of Firmicus Maternus, who says that 'for three days the battle with death's forces raged'; but this account is so unique that it may be taken as a

[1] Origen, *in Rom.* v. 1.
[2] *Ibid.* vi. 6.
[3] *Hom. in Exod.* v. 2; *in Rom.* v. 1.
[4] Hippol., in Theodoret, *Dial.* 2; cf. Tertullian, *adv. Judæos*, 10.
[5] Clement, *Protrept.* 11, *Pædag.* ii. 8.

rhetorical amplification.[1] Origen also speaks of Christ's wrestling with the powers in Hades as their Master, but he doubtless employs the phrase allegorically.[2] Christ's victory over the devil is gained on the Cross. Thus, in the Bishop's prayer in the *Egyptian Church Order*, our Lord is said to have been delivered up of His own will to suffering that He might abolish death and burst the bonds of Satan. Then followed the trampling on Hades.[3] So Ambrose speaks of Christ first triumphing over the devil and then descending into the heart of the earth.[4]

Many of the early references to the Descent speak only of Christ's presence in Hades or of His Preaching there, and do not speak of a conquest of Death or Hades. We shall pass in review those which do speak of it.

To take first the Creeds and other formulæ, the *Egyptian Church Order* speaks of Christ's 'trampling on Hades'; the Mystagogia in the *Testament of our Lord* says that Christ 'trod on Sheol and destroyed death by death,' and in the Arabian *Didascalia* that He conquered Hades and by His death drove death into hiding. According to S. Athanasius, in his *de Virginitate*, Hades, seeing Christ, 'shuddered and was astonished'; and the twelfth hour is a time for prayer and praise because Christ conquered death and Hades. So in the Sirmian and corre-

[1] See p. 119, *supra*. Cf. the Syriac *History of John*, p. 145, *supra*, in which the demons say that their master fought with Christ; but this was not necessarily in Hades.

[2] Origen, *in Rom.* v. 1.

[3] Cf. a passage in the Mystagogia in *Test. Domini*: 'Under whom, after the Cross, Death fell and was conquered, when his bonds, whereby the devil sometimes waxed strong and prevailed, were dissolved, and through whose Passion Death was manifested useless and weak when Jesus cut his cords and his power, when his snares were cut and He struck him on the face—even Death who was filled with darkness and was shaken and feared, beholding the Only-Begotten Son, who in His human soul (*πρόσωπον*) descended in the Godhead into Sheol, who descended from the pure heights above the heavens' (Cooper and MacLean, p. 85).

[4] See pp. 77, 120, *supra*.

sponding creeds, the gatekeepers of Hades, seeing Christ, shuddered ; or Hades trembled ; or Hades was terrified. The ' Faith of Jerome ' says that Christ ' trod down the sting of death ' by His Descent.[1]

The *Apology* ascribed to Melito, bishop of Sardis, says that Christ ' trampled death under His feet, and conquered the power and set man free.' This may be merely a reference to the Passion. In the *Odes of Solomon* a conquest of Death and Sheol is spoken of, and though the phrase in Ode xxii., ' overthrows by His hands the seven-headed dragon,' occurs, it is not certain that this is the devil, or, if it is, that he is here regarded as Lord of Hades. Gregory Thaumaturgos says that Death is destroyed and Hades trodden underfoot, its chains broken, and the tyrant bound. In Pseudo-Athanasius the terror of the janitors of Hades, the abolishing of Death, and the destruction of the pains of Hades are mentioned. Eusebius describes the fear of Death and the flight of the powers of Hades ; and the terror and conquest of Death and Hades are also graphically depicted by Ephrem Syrus and Aphraates. Hades is uprooted ; Death is chained in an eternal prison. Firmicus Maternus also speaks of Christ's trampling on Death. S. Cyril of Jerusalem describes the fear of Death at the Descent, and the terror of the janitors and the flight of Death.[2]

In Apocryphal writings the same ideas occur. The *Ascension of Isaiah* speaks of Christ's plundering the angel of Death, and desolating Hades and its phantoms. The *Acts of Thomas* tell how the rulers (ἄρχοντες) of Death were not able to endure even the sight of Christ in Hades, and how He did violence to Death. These rulers are distinct from the devil or the world-power. In the *Story of Peter and Paul*, Death is terrified and hides himself. The flight of Death and the desolation of Amente

[1] For these passages see Chapter VI., *supra*.
[2] For these passages see Chapter VII., *supra*.

are described in the *Book of the Resurrection*, and in the *Questions of Bartholomew* Hades is scourged and bound with chains.[1]

By none of these is Satan regarded as Lord of Hades. It is interesting to notice how frequently the phrase 'trampled Death or Hades underfoot' recurs in these passages.[2]

There are other passages, however, in which Satan appears in connexion with Hades, usually personified, but not as Lord of the Underworld. He speaks with Hades and Death, and is in league with them (cf. the Hymns of Ephrem Syrus), but these are independent of him. Most of these passages speak of Satan being bound and consigned to Hades or Tartarus as a prisoner.

Thus in Pseudo-Athanasius Satan is in Hades, but is ejected from it.[3] Ephrem Syrus brings Death, Hades, and Satan into one group, though their actions are separated. All are terrified, and Satan is seized and trampled underfoot.[4] S. Jerome speaks of the house of Satan, the strong one, as this world (1 S. John v. 19), and men as his goods. But now the strong one is bound and made fast in Tartarus, bruised by the foot of the Lord.[5] S. Cyril of Alexandria speaks of Satan being left desolate and alone in Hades, but does not speak of him as its Lord. In the *Questions of Bartholomew*, Beliar and Hades are brought together in Hades; and in the *Book of the Resurrection* the 'shameless one' is put in fetters (as in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*), and the ministers of Satan are bound, though he is not described

[1] For these passages see Chapter VIII., *supra*.

[2] Cf. the Te Deum, *Tu devicto mortis aculeo*, and the corresponding phrases in the *Missale Goth.*

[3] See p. 110, *supra*. In the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, when Satan has come to bid Hades bind Christ, as the Voice is heard, terror overcomes them and Hades casts forth Satan to oppose, if he can, the coming Christ (c. 5, Latin A).

[4] P. 111, *supra*.

[5] Jerome, *in Matth.* xii. 29.

as Lord of Hades.[1] The Eusebian Homilies, like Ephrem Syrus and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, show Satan and Hades as friends; but their friendship is soon dissolved when Christ comes to the gates of Hades. The powers of Hades are trampled underfoot, the pains of Death are loosed, the sting of Hades crushed. Satan is bound by Christ and led to the lowest depths. In the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, while Satan visits Hades, his craft is wrought on earth. In the Latin version (A), he is cast out of Hades to oppose Christ. In the sequel, Christ tramples on Death, overcomes Hades, lays hold on Satan (Latin A) or delivers him to be bound (Greek), and gives him to the powers of Hades. He is cast into the bottomless pit; or Satan and Hades are said to be left in Tartarus (Latin B). He is called 'prince of Tartarus' in Latin A (c. 4); but this is rather by anticipation, and Tartarus appears as a different and lower region. Hades is not represented in *Nicodemus* as a place of torment.

The idea that Satan is lord of hell is not found in the earlier Fathers, and only appeared at a later time. We may see a trace of it in *Nicodemus*, though the thought is alien to the rest of the book. Hades calls Satan 'possessor of the keys of the Underworld' (Lat. A, c. 7). This assumes that, until Christ became possessor of these, they were in Satan's hands, perhaps in the sense that he had the 'power of death.' S. Chrysostom also speaks of Satan as 'keeper of the prison.'[2] A possible reference to Satan as Lord of the Underworld might be seen in the *Acts of Callistratus*, where Christ releases those who were bound by him, but this may be interpreted in the sense which

[1] Cf. the Sermon of Cæsarius of Arles (cited on p. 197, *supra*), in which Christ at His Descent is said *diabolum obligasse*. In Pseudo-Epiphanius, when the Powers of Christ destroy the prison, others of them bind the tyrant (p. 194, *supra*). In the *Acts of Thomas*, c. 32, the dragon, who dwells in and holds the abyss of Tartarus, is 'wronged by the Son of God,' but he is not the devil.

[2] Chrysostom, *in appel. Cœm. et in Crucem.*, cited in Thilo, p. 735.

Irenæus gives to this binding. In the Christian interpolation of a passage in the *Testament of the XII Patriarchs* the 'captivity' taken from Beliar is explained as 'the souls of the saints,' as if he were Lord of Hades—a unique conception at that time.[1]

The conquest of Death and Hades is thus connected with the Descent, and with it, in certain documents, a binding of Satan in chains and consigning him to Tartarus. These conceptions have been traced to mythical sources, but even if some of the later references have been coloured by suggestions from Pagan myths, the primary source, even in the realism of *Nicodemus*, is to be found in passages in the Gospels and Epistles, which were forced into connexion with the Descent, and also in Jewish belief. As we have seen, some early writers trace the victory to the Cross. Just before the crucifixion our Lord said: 'The prince of this world is judged,' and 'Now shall the prince of this world be cast out,' for he 'cometh and hath nothing in Me.'[2] The period of the Passion is that when 'the power of darkness' will do its worst, but Christ has delivered us from it.[3] In the light of these passages, there can be no doubt that the illustration of binding the strong man and spoiling his goods[4] refers to Christ's victory over evil through His Passion. In this sense, though with a possible side glance to the Descent, it was taken by Irenæus; but it lent itself to the conception of an assault upon Death and Hades and a spoiling of their goods (souls), as Origen saw. S. Paul also regards Christ's work as a deliverance from the power of darkness and Satan, wrought out by the crucifixion. Christ is the con-

[1] For these passages see pp. 130, 138, *supra*, and cf. the passage from *Acts of Andrew and Paul*, p. 149, *supra*. Cf. also *Acts of Thomas*, c. 143, cited p. 142, *supra*.

[2] S. John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11.

[3] S. Luke xxii. 53, 'This is your hour and the power of darkness'; Col. i. 13, 'who delivered us out of the power of darkness.'

[4] S. Luke xi. 21.

queror who has spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His cross. That cross of suffering and death is as a triumphal car on which the Conqueror exhibits the vanquished powers of evil.[1] The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews regards Christ's Death as that which overcame him that had the power of death, the devil, and delivers his captives, and his language is echoed by Origen, who connects the victory over 'him who had the power of death' with Christ's Descent.[2] The same thought underlies S. John's teaching that the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.[3] But, as is easily understood, the deliverance of mankind from Satan is still ideal: they still must wrestle against spiritual wickedness. Christians are exposed to Satan's attacks; but his power is broken and they can conquer him through the grace of Christ. Hence the victory may be regarded as now ideally complete—'that wicked one toucheth him not.'[4] Or, as in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the disciple can be reassured: 'Fear not the devil, for he has no power over you.' Or again, in the *Acts of Paul*, Thecla believes that after baptism she will be free from Satan's attacks: 'Give me the seal in Christ, and temptation will not touch me.'[5]

Hence also, being ideal, the binding of the strong man

[1] Col. ii. 14, 15. Cf. F. H. Chase, *TS* 1891, i. part 3. In the Gnostic fragment of the *Acts of John* the multitude 'of one form and likeness' seen round the cross of light are the lower nature, and may be regarded as divided from it by the higher nature and put to flight (*Acts of John*, c. 98 ff.). In *Nicodemus* Christ sets up His Cross in Hades as a sign of victory. This combines the ideas of conquest through the Cross and through the Descent. The Latin *Assumption of the Virgin*, ascribed to Melito, describes Christ saying that when He hung on the Cross the prince of darkness came but found no sign of his work in Him. He therefore departed vanquished and trodden down, c. 8.

[2] Heb. ii. 14 f.; Origen, *Hom. in Gen.* xvii. 5.

[3] 1 S. John iii. 8.

[4] 1 S. John v. 18.

[5] *Hermas*, Mand. xii. 4; *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, c. 25.

might be referred to the future, as in Rev. xx. 1 f., 10, to the beginning of the Millennial period when the devil is bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years. After that period he is temporarily loosed, but finally cast into the lake of fire. This is done by an angel, who here, in all probability, takes the place of the Messiah, the Child of the woman clothed with the sun and persecuted by the dragon (Satan). This idea is taken from Jewish Apocalyptic sources, the rebellion of Satan against God and his being hurled into the abyss having become a current eschatological expectation. In the *Testament of Levi*, at the end of all things, when the gates of Paradise will be opened, Beliar will be bound by Messiah; or, as in the *Testament of Judah*, he will be cast into the fire for ever at the resurrection; or, as in the *Testament of Asher*, the Most High will break the head of the dragon in the water (cf. Ps. lxxiv. 13).[1] The *Assumption of Moses* says: 'Then shall God's rule appear over all His creatures; then shall the devil be no more, and with him misery (sorrow) shall come to an end,' *i.e.* at the coming reign of God.[2]

These Jewish ideas have been traced to Persia and to the Persian eschatological belief of a battle between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu.[3] On the other hand, the idea of an imprisonment of evil spiritual powers was not foreign to Jewish thought. Isaiah speaks of the shutting in prison of some of 'the host of the high ones on high' (xxiv. 21). In the *Book of Enoch* Azazel is bound hand and foot, and cast into the darkness, into the desert, covered with rocks and darkness. On the day of judgment he will be cast into the fire. The angels who sinned

[1] *Test. of XII Patriarchs*, *Levi* xviii. 12, *Judah* xxv. 3, *Asher* vii. 3 (a Christian interpolation explains the Most High as Christ). Cf. R. H. Charles, *A Crit. and Exeg. Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, Edinburgh, 1920, ii. 143.

[2] *Assumption of Moses*, x. 1.

[3] W. Bousset, 'Antichrist,' *ERE* i. 578; L. H. Mills, *Avesta Eschatology*, Chicago, 1908, p. 35.

with the daughters of men are bound fast in the valleys (or in the hills) till the judgment, when they, too, will be led off to the abyss of fire.[1] In the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, rebellious, ambitious angels await the judgment in darkness in the second Heaven; others, with Satanael, are kept in ward in the fifth Heaven. The angels who sinned with women are condemned to be under the earth.[2] According to the *Book of Jubilees* the lustful angels are bound in the depths of the earth;[3] or 'tormented in chains,' as in 2 Baruch.[4]

We find also in the prophetic books the idea of bringing Death and Sheol to naught. Isaiah says that God hath swallowed up Death for ever (xxv. 8). Hosea makes God exclaim:

> 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave (Sheol);
> I will redeem them from Death:
> O Death, where are thy plagues?
> O grave (Sheol), where is thy destruction?' (xiii. 14);

or,

> 'O Death, I will be thy plagues,
> O grave, I will be thy destruction' (R.V. margin).

So in 4 Esdras (viii. 53) a destruction of Death and Hades is foretold: 'Death is hidden; Hades fled away.' And in 2 Baruch (xxi. 23) we have: 'Let Sheol be sealed so that from this time forward it may not receive the dead, and let the treasuries of souls restore those that are enclosed in them.'

The passages in Isaiah and Hosea are echoed by S. Paul in the triumphant close of his argument on the Resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 55). In Rev. xx. 14, Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire.

Thus a future destruction of Death and Hades was found

[1] *Enoch*, x. Cf. S. Jude 6, 2 S. Pet. ii. 4.
[2] *Secrets of Enoch*, vii. 1–3, xviii.
[3] *Jubilees*, v. 5.
[4] 2 Baruch lvi. 13.

in Jewish thought. By those who cherished the doctrine of the Descent it was connected with that Descent.

The Jewish conception of the conquest of Beliar may have its sources in the so-called 'international myth' of the destruction of an evil, chaotic power by a god or the Divine son of a goddess, to whom, as to other deities, he has been hostile. This is found in Babylon (Marduk's conquest of Tiamat), in Egypt (the destruction of Typhon by Horus, son of Isis), in Greece (the slaying of Pytho by Apollo), and in Persia. Even so, it was welcome to Jewish belief and was deeply rooted in its soil. The account of the conquest of the dragon by an angel in Rev. xii., the dragon being hostile to the woman or goddess, the mother of Messiah, is a semi-christianized form of one or, more likely, two myths (birth of a child from a goddess, with whom a dragon is at enmity; conquest of the dragon by heavenly powers) which had been found in Jewish sources, but there borrowed from Pagan myths. The earlier section, vv. 1 to 6, with 13 ff., is a form of the aforesaid 'international myth.'[1]

Taking the various factors—the conquest of Death and Hades and the binding of Satan, the latter was first metaphorical, the conquest of Satan, the strong one, through the Cross. It was then associated with the Descent, as in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. The former was early connected with the Descent, as was natural. Christ, by submission to Death and the Underworld, won complete authority over both. He could not be held by them. They cannot now keep from Him those to whom He preaches His salvation, or those faithful ones who looked for His coming. Hence, as in Rev. i. 18, He has the keys of Death and Hades, because He has entered their realm as a Conqueror; He who was dead is alive and makes the dead live.

[1] T. K. Cheyne, *Bible Problems*, London, 1904, pp. 379 ff.; W. Bousset, *Die Offenbarung Johannis*, Göttingen, 1906, pp. 410 ff.; R. H. Charles, *Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, i. 298 ff.

The original source of these conceptions is to be found in Jewish thought.

With the Gnostics the conquest of the Archons and the Cosmocrator was referred either to the Descent of the heavenly Christ through the Heavens, or to His work on earth, the lower world of Gnostic thought. In the ' Hymn of the Pearl ' [1] in the *Acts of Thomas*, the world-dragon is overpowered by the king's son, who comes from a higher region and takes the pearl from its keeping — a beautifully imaginative poem ascribed to Bardaisan. The combat with the world-powers is also referred to in the Gnostic liturgical formula in the *Acts of Thomas*, in which the mother is invoked as she who communicates in all the combats of the noble combatant.[2] Christ is the combatant who has entered this lower world and whose strife with the Archons is watched from afar by the mother. These are poetic forms of the doctrine as taught, *e.g.*, by Saturninus, that the Father wished to annihilate the Archons, and that Christ came into the world to effect this.[3]

[1] *Acts of Thomas*, c. 108 f. See A. A. Bevan, *TS* vol. v.; for Egyptian affinities in the Hymn, see R. Reitzenstein, ' Zwei Hellenistiche Hymnen,' *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, viii. 167 ff.

[2] *Acts of Thomas*, c. 50; Lipsius, *Acta Apost. Apocr.* i. 317 f.; Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, p. 254.

[3] Iren. *adv. Hær.* i. 24. 2.

CHAPTER XV

THE PREACHING IN HADES

Some of the later Fathers and many of the Apocryphal writings say nothing of Christ's Preaching in Hades, *e.g.* the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, in which, however, S. John Baptist announces Christ's coming and that whosoever will believe in Him will be saved. In many of these references to the Descent, Christ's presence and His conquest of Hades cause immediate joy to those who are obviously expecting Him, and whom He forthwith removes to a better state. But doubtless the tradition of the Preaching was known to some of those writers who do not specifically mention it.

The announcement of the good news of salvation in Hades forms the earliest and most widely diffused conception of the purpose of the presence of Christ's Soul in Hades. In the words of Hippolytus, Christ is 'the Preacher to the dead' (ὁ τῶν νεκρῶν Εὐαγγελιστής). Conjoined with the Preaching in some references we find the breaking of the gates, the terror of the Underworld powers, and the triumph over Hades and them.

Another simple reason for the presence of Christ in Hades is sometimes connected with the Preaching, namely, His submission to the law of death. Irenæus says: 'The Lord observed the law of death,' and it was for the sake of His disciples—all who believe in Him—that He 'wrought these things.'[1] Christ being Man as well as God, says Tertullian,

[1] Iren. v. 31. 2.

'complied fully with the same law of His being by remaining in Hades in the form and condition of a dead man.' [1] S. Hilary says that Christ did not refuse the Descent into Hades, thus consummating a true Man and fulfilling 'the law of human necessity.' [2] This thought of the law of death—the burial of the body, the presence of the soul in Hades—to which our Lord submitted, is echoed in later writers.

The references to the tradition of the Preaching begin with the earliest notices of the Descent. It was already taught by Ignatius, Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian (inferred rather than expressed), Cyprian, Hippolytus, Clement (who says that the preaching of the Gospel was the sole cause of the Descent), Origen, *i.e.* by nearly all the earlier Fathers. The tradition of the Preaching was familiar enough to be known to the Pagan Celsus; it was made use of by the Gnostic Marcion. Justin and Irenæus connect it with a prophetic apocryphon, which the former accuses the Jews of having excised from Scripture.

An early witness is also found in the *Odes of Solomon* (xvii., xlii.), in the *Epistle of the Apostles* (*c.* 160 A.D.), and in the fragment of the *Gospel of Peter*, where the Preaching to them that slept is affirmed.[3] We find it also in the *Egyptian Church Order*, probably by Hippolytus, which speaks twice of the 'enlightenment' of the saints in Hades; in the *Testament of our Lord* ('to enlighten them'); and in the Syriac *Didascalia* ('*ut evangelizaret Abraham, et Isaac, et Jacob, et sanctis suis universis*').

Earlier than any of these, the witness in Irenæus to the tradition of the Preaching goes back to a former generation than his own, that of one of the Presbyters, who had in turn

[1] Tertullian, *de Anima*, 55.

[2] Hilary, *Enarr. in Ps.* 53 and 138.

[3] See also citations from the *Sibylline Oracles* and the *Acts of Thomas*, Syriac version, 'became in Sheol peace and hope to the dead.'

heard it from those who had been disciples of the Apostles, or who had been himself a disciple of the Apostles.[1]

Even writers who think more of a victory in Hades and a freeing of souls, speak, as does Ephrem Syrus, of Christ's proclaiming that they were set at liberty, or of the Voice sounding through Hades.[2]

The passages in 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, iv. 6, referring to the Preaching in Hades are not cited by any of the earlier writers who speak of it, though, as we have seen, some of them may have inferred it. Cyprian, in his *Testimonia contra Judæos*, is the first to quote the passage in iv. 6. He also cites iii. 18, but not the following verse, which speaks of the Preaching.[3] Clement of Alexandria refers to iii. 19: 'Do not the Scriptures declare that the Lord preached to those destroyed in the Flood, or rather to those bound, and held in prison (*φυλακῇ*) and ward?' though his argument leads him away from the inference of this passage.[4]

Hippolytus, in calling Christ 'the Preacher to the dead,' may be thinking of iv. 6 (*ὁ τῶν νεκρῶν Εὐαγγελιστής*: *νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη*). He also seems to refer to iii. 19 when he speaks of a Preaching to those 'who were formerly not convinced.'[5]

Most of the writers who speak of the Preaching limit it to the Old Testament saints. Hence, though these passages were known to them (Justin comments on the story of Noah

[1] Iren. iv. 27. 1, 2, iv. 32. 1.

[2] Ephrem, pp. 112, 114, *supra*. Cf. *Acts of Thomas*, c. 10, 'the Voice heard by the rulers'; and *Gospel of Nicod.*, Latin B, c. 2, the Voice of the Son ordering the removal of the gates. In Latin A and Greek, c. 5, simply 'a Voice.' Cf. the Voice of the angels in the *Anaphora of Pilate*, and, in *Gospel of Bartholomew*, i. 13 (James, p. 168), Hades hears the breathing of the descending Christ and cannot endure it.

[3] Cyprian, *Test.* ii. 27.

[4] Clement, *Strom.* vi. 45.

[5] Hippolytus, see p. 96, *supra*.

in such a way as shows that he knew iii. 19), because they spoke of a Preaching to the disobedient of Noah's day or to all the dead, these writers pass them by. They did not suit a doctrine of Christ's Preaching to the righteous dead only. Those who took a more liberal view, *e.g.* Clement and Origen, could make use of them. If the disobedient of Noah's day were preached to in Hades, then even the heathen might have heard the good news and profited by it.[1] Assuming for the moment that the Petrine passages do refer to a Preaching in Hades, then there may have been from early times differing traditions, one limiting the Preaching to the Old Testament saints, the other making it include all the dead. S. Peter may have originated this tradition, which, however, does not again come to light until the latter half of the second century, unless we take 'them that slept' in the *Gospel of Peter* to include all, not only righteous men of the Old Covenant. S. Peter says nothing of a release of souls from Hades as a result of the Preaching, though they are to 'live according to God in the spirit,' and an improvement in their character would be a natural result of their accepting the Preaching.[2] Neither Justin, Irenæus, nor Tertullian speak definitely of a release from Hades. On the other hand, a simple rescue of souls from Hades is found in *Nicodemus* and elsewhere. Origen clearly combines the Preaching and the release of souls.[3]

S. Paul makes no reference to a Preaching in Hades. Did he suggest the release of souls? This, though it is unlikely, may be suggested by his citation of the words 'when He ascended up on high He led captivity captive,' in connexion with

[1] A Preaching to the righteous might have been suggested by S. Luke xiii. 28, Heb. xii. 23; the wider view by the Petrine passages and by S. Matt. xviii. 14, S. Mark xvi. 15, S. John v. 25.

[2] Popular traditions of a more general rescue, traces of which occur in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, may have been based on the Petrine passage at a comparatively early date, as they were in Augustine's day.

[3] Origen, *de Princip.* ii. 5. 3, ii. 6. 2, *contra Celsum*, ii. 43.

a reference to the Descent (Eph. iv. 8, 9). 'Captivity,' though in a cited passage, recalls S. Peter's 'spirits in prison.' But behind all these traditions, if we may assume them to have existed separately, there lay the belief, bound to have been suggested to the disciples the moment that Christ died, namely, that of the presence of His soul in Hades, His Descent there—the general and well-known belief of the Jews regarding all who died. With that the traditions of the Preaching and Rescue came to be connected, in whatever way they arose.

In line with the tradition of Christ's Preaching in Hades are three others. (1) One is that as Christ had forerunners on earth, so also forerunners in Hades announced His coming thither. Hippolytus seems to be the first to refer to this, speaking of S. John Baptist as announcing to those in Hades the coming of Christ there.[1] Origen also speaks of the Baptist as Christ's forerunner in Hades: 'He died before Christ that, descending to Hades, he might announce His advent.' But Origen also speaks of Moses and the prophets preaching Christ's coming in Hades, just as they had done on earth. Origen also speaks of S. Paul as, after his death, an apostle of the heathen and Jews and all other invisible beings.[2] The belief in the Baptist as forerunner in Hades was shared by other writers.[3] We have seen the place which it occupies in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and this is echoed in one of the Homilies of Eusebius of Alexandria. After the Baptist's death, he came to those in Hades, and they, beholding the splendour of his light (λύχνος),[4] recognized him, and asked him about Christ, knowing that He must be near. He told them that Christ would lead them from Hades. They ran to him, rejoicing, and the prophets and others

[1] *de Antichr.* 45, see p. 95, *supra*.

[2] *in Luc. Hom.* iv.; *in Evang. Ioann.* ii. 37; *Hom.* 2 *in 1 Reg.*, 28; *in Ep. ad Rom.* vi. 10.

[3] Cf. Greg. Naz. *Oratio* xliii.

[4] Cf. S. John v. 35, 'He was a burning and a shining light' (λύχνος).

began to quote, at his request, what they had foretold of Christ, in order that those in Hades might be of good cheer.[1] The Easter Eve Homily of Pseudo-Epiphanius also speaks of the Baptist as 'the twofold forerunner,' and preacher to the living and the dead, who from the prison of Herod was sent to the common prison of Hades, preaching Christ to all there.[2]

Connected with this belief in the Baptist as the forerunner in Hades is a favourite interpretation of his sending to Christ to ask: 'Art Thou He that shall come, or do we look for another?' This is the subject of a Homily of Eusebius of Alexandria. S. John was about to die, and those in Hades would ask him: 'Who will lead us hence?' In order to be ready with an answer, he sent to Christ and asked this question, because he did not believe that He would take upon Himself to descend to Hades or even be subject to death. Our Lord's reply signified that the dead would be raised from Hades by Him, and the forerunner was to announce this to them. Those in Hades must enjoy His compassion. For until His advent all, even the great prophets, were shut up in Hades.[3]

Origen gave a similar interpretation of this passage, as did also Jerome, Gregory Nazianzen, Rufinus, the *Dialogue of Adamantius*, and others.[4] It is also suggested in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, both in the Greek and Latin (B) versions, the former saying: 'For this cause He *sent* me unto you,' and the latter: 'I *have received an answer* from Him that He would Himself descend *ad inferos*.'[5]

(2) The second tradition is that the apostles preached and

[1] Eus. Alex. *Hom.*, in Migne, *PG* lxxxvi. 1. 509 f.

[2] Ps. Epiph. *Hom.*, in *ibid.* xliii. 439 f.

[3] Eus. Alex. *Hom.*, in *ibid.* lxxxvi. 380 f.

[4] Origen, *in Libr. Reg.*, *Hom.* ii., Migne, *PG* xii. 1025; Jerome, *Ep.* 121 *ad Algas.*, *quæst.* 1, *Com. in Matth.* ii. 11, Migne, *PL* xxii. 1004, xxvi. 72; Greg. the Great, *in Ezek.*, *Hom.* 1, *in Evang. Hom.* 6; Rufinus, *Expos. Symb.* c. 28; *Dial. Adam.* i. 26.

[5] *Gosp. of Nicod.* c. ii. 2 (Gk.), c. v. 2 (Lat. B).

baptized in Hades, as in the *Shepherd of Hermas*. The author says nothing of Christ's Preaching in Hades, either because he did not know this tradition,[1] which is unlikely, or because of the conception running through his work that Christ is not the Preacher to men, but the apostles. This is their world mission, and preaching and baptism are central thoughts in this work. Hence the author regarded them as fulfilling this mission also in Hades. This, however, was only a development of the existing doctrine of the Descent.[2] Clement, who cites the *Shepherd*, maintains that the apostles preached in Hades, following there the example of Christ. In both the *Shepherd* and Clement, the Preaching is followed by an upward movement of those who accept it.

(3) The third tradition is that, as *Hermas* shows, not only a Preaching, but baptism took place in Hades. Baptism was believed to be absolutely necessary to salvation. It was true that, as some insisted, Abraham had pleased God by faith alone without baptism.[3] Nevertheless, its universal necessity raised the question—What was the position of the righteous dead who had not been baptized? *Hermas* cuts the knot by showing that they were baptized in Hades. Is he followed in this by any other writer? In the *Epistle of the Apostles* the same stress is laid on baptism. Hence our Lord, speaking of His Descent, tells of His baptizing the righteous dead. 'I held out to them My right hand, the baptism of life and remission and forgiveness of all evil, as I did to you and them that believe on Me.'[4] Thus as Christ baptized on earth (S. John ii. 22, 26, iv. 1), so He baptized in Hades.

[1] *Shep. of Hermas*, Simil. ix. 16. 5; F. Loofs, 'Christ's Descent into Hell,' *TCHR* ii. 295.

[2] So Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 488.

[3] Tertullian, *de Bapt.* 14.

[4] *Epist. of Apostles*, Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 86. This is the Ethiopic version. The Coptic text is incomplete: 'I have poured out (?) with My right [hand] over them . . . of life and forgiveness and deliverance from all . . . as I did to you.'

Irenæus does not expressly mention baptism in Hades, but his language suggests it. The Presbyter, who had heard from those who had seen the apostles, is cited, and says: 'There was remission of sins for those in Hades who believed, whose sins He forgave, *even as He did to us*' (cf. 'as I did to you,' in the passage from the *Epistle of the Apostles*). 'They had our Lord's death for the healing and remission of sins' (*curatio et remissio peccatorum*). As so much stress was laid on baptism by the early Church, baptism is probably implied here. The Old Testament saints receive remission of sins through baptism, as Christians do on earth, and for the latter 'who now sin, Christ shall no more die.' 'All who from the beginning are disciples, being cleansed and washed from that which is of death, may come to the life of God.' Christ gave His disciples 'the power of regeneration into God' when He bade them 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them, etc.' 'We could not be made one in Christ Jesus without the water which is from Heaven.'[1]

Since baptism was known in the early Church as 'illumination' (*φωτισμός*, *φώτισμα*), the candidates as *φωτιζόμενοι*, and the baptized as *φωτισθέντες*, and since already in Heb. vi. 4 and x. 32, *φωτισθέντες* refers to Christian initiation in baptism,[2] it is not impossible that the references in the *Egyptian Church Order* and the *Testament of our Lord* to enlightenment in Hades may refer to baptism as well as to instruction. 'He sent His Word *inluminantem eos*,' is the phrase in the instructions for prayer at the ninth hour (cf. *Test.*, 'sent His Word and Wisdom to enlighten them'); '*et justos inluminet*,' in the Bishop's Eucharistic prayer.[3] In this connexion it is interesting to note

[1] Iren. iv. 27. 2, iv. 22. 1, iii. 17. 1, 2. As Clement of Alexandria follows and uses the passage in *Hermas*, he also probably assumed a baptism as well as a Preaching in Hades.

[2] A. J. MacLean, *ERE* viii. 54.

[3] See pp. 75, 77, *supra*.

that the Verona Latin fragments of the *Didascalia*, in speaking of baptism, call it *inluminatio, quod dicit Græcus fotisma*.[1]

The same belief in baptism of the dead saints in Hades appears, though in a different form, in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. The saints who are taken from Hades and who have risen are baptized in Jordan and receive white robes, as was foretold to Seth concerning Adam by the angel: 'With water and the Holy Ghost shall Christ wash him and them that come of him.'[2]

All this is in keeping with the custom of vicarious baptism referred to by S. Paul, 'baptized for the dead' (1 Cor. xv. 29). And a parallel is found in the Vision of S. Perpetua. Her brother Dinocrates had died unbaptized. She sees him in a dark, foul region trying vainly to reach water in a font. She prays for him, and now sees that he can reach the font and that he drinks from an unfailing cup of gold. Then he runs away to play, and she knows that he has been released from the place of punishment. It is also noteworthy that, as has been seen, the effect of baptism is so often made parallel to the effect of the Descent, while baptism took place on Easter Eve. 'The immersion in water is as a descent *in infernum*, and the coming forth again from the water is a resurrection,'[3] is the interesting statement of a canon of the fourth Council of Toledo.

Enlightenment in Hades, whether moral and spiritual or the result of baptism, is sometimes symbolized as an actual light, the result of Christ's presence, shining in the gloom of Hades—a very natural conception. An early example of this occurs in the *Odes of Solomon* (xxxi.), where it is said that 'darkness was destroyed' by Christ's appearance in Hades. Ephrem Syrus says: 'In Hades, never before lit up, there flash splendours'—not, however, from Christ, but from the angels

[1] Hauler, *Didas. Apost., Fragmenta Veron. Latina*, p. 87. Cf. Funk, *Didasc. et Const. Apost.* i. 380.

[2] *Nicod.* c. 11; cf. c. 3 (Greek).

[3] Fourth Council of Toledo, canon vi. (633 A.D.).

who enter and bring out the dead to meet Him. But, again, when the gates of Hades were opened, 'there shone in the splendour of the face of the Lord.' Prudentius speaks of Christ 'illumining the caves of Death with golden light, bringing dazzling day to the realms of darkness.' S. Hilary similarly writes about His enlightening the darkness of Death and illumining the obscurity of Hades.[1] According to S. Chrysostom, Hades was a sad place, very dark, where no natural light shone, until the Sun of Righteousness descended and made Heaven of Hades.[2]

With these may be compared the questions of Hades in the Mystagogia of the *Testament of our Lord*: 'What is that glory which those all around are not able to look into?' and of the *Didascalia*: 'Who is this whom this light surrounds, which does not grow less?'[3]

The *Gospel of Nicodemus* tells how, before the Descent, there shone at midnight upon those dark places as it had been the light of the sun (Greek); or, 'a golden glow of the sun and a purple and royal light' (Latin A). Then, when Christ entered Hades, 'all the dark places of Hades were lightened' (ἐφωτίσθησαν); or, as in Latin A, He 'lightened the eternal darkness.'[4] In the Homily of Eusebius of Alexandria, already cited, S. John Baptist, as forerunner in Hades, is recognized by the 'brightness of his light.' For as when day begins to

[1] See these and other parallel passages under their respective authors in Chapter VII.

[2] Chrysostom, *Hom. de Cœm. et Cruce*, in *Opera*, 1718, ii. 399. Cf. also the words of S. Gregory Thaumaturgos, p. 108, *supra*, about Christ's kindling the torch of His Body for those who sit in darkness.

[3] See pp. 78, 79, *supra*.

[4] *Nicod.* cc. 18, 21. The light which precedes the Descent might be connected with the Nativity, for Simeon appears and speaks of having received the Child in his arms. But this is precluded by the fact that the two narrators of the Descent were recently dead, yet saw this light, and that the story goes on at once to recount the Descent. For midnight as the hour of the Descent, see Athanas. *de Virg.*, quoted p. 79, *supra*.

dawn the Morning Star heralds the approach of the sun, so John appeared in Hades as a light heralding the coming of the Sun of Righteousness.[1]

Does the tradition of Christ's preaching in Hades owe anything to current mythical conceptions? There is no Greek, Egyptian, or Babylonian myth which offers any parallel to this. The Persian myth of Zarathustra's teaching being announced in Yima's kingdom by the bird Karshipta is not likely to have been known to early Christians, and offers but a remote parallel to the subject, though it bears witness to what all ethical religions feel as an inherent necessity, that all orders of creatures should benefit by the revelation of truth.[2] Farther east, while there are Hindu and Buddhist myths of visits of a divinity, hero, or saint to the Hells, in the Indian and Southern Buddhist myths there is no Preaching by these in the Underworld. Even in the popular Life of Buddha, the *Lalita Vistara*, he does not do this. The Northern Buddhist legends of enlightenment in Hell, or proclamation of the sacred doctrine, if they existed in the first century A.D., were unlikely to have been known in Palestine. They are probably of later date, and may themselves have been influenced from Christian sources. There is, however, no need to postulate this, and the chief points of the story of Avalokitesvara—the detailed description of Hell and the sudden change of torments to bliss—have no parallels in the earlier Christian Descent story. We therefore conclude that the story of the Preaching in Hades is free from any Pagan mythical influence.[3]

But it is not impossible that something akin to the conception of a Preaching in Hades was already existent in later Judaism. In the *Book of Enoch* the patriarch is sent to proclaim

[1] Migne, *PL* lxxxvi. 1. 512–13.

[2] *Vendidad*, ii. 42, in *Sacred Books of the East*, iv. 21.

[3] Cf. J. A. van den Bergh van Eysinga, *Indische Einflusse auf Evangelische Erzählungen*, Göttingen, 1909, pp. 87–88.

to Azazel and the fallen angels that a severe sentence has gone out against them, and that no mercy will ever be shown them. They ask him to draw up a petition that they may find forgiveness. He writes it, reads it, and falls asleep, and then has visions in which he learns that the petition will not be granted.[1] Again we hear of the antediluvian giants and the men whom they deluded. A time of repentance is to be given them between the first judgment (the deluge) and the last, and 'there was joy among them because the name of the Son of Man was revealed to them.'[2] In a Latin text of Ecclesiasticus (xxiv. 32) Wisdom says: 'I will penetrate all the lower parts of the earth, and will visit all that sleep, and will enlighten all that hope in the Lord.' This strongly resembles the apocryphon cited by Justin and Irenæus from Jeremiah, and which the former says was still found in certain synagogue copies: 'The Lord, the Holy One of Israel, remembered His dead ones who slept in the dust of the earth, and descended to them to preach His salvation and save them.'[3] It should be remembered also that the first clear notice of a resurrection belief in the Old Testament takes the form of a proclamation to the shades in Sheol: 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of earth' (Isa. xxvi. 19). Again, though probably of later date than the period of the formation of the Descent story, the passage in *Bereschit Rabba* may point to an older belief: 'When they that are bound, they that are in Gehinnom, saw the light of the Messiah [at its gates], they rejoiced to receive Him, saying, He will lead us forth from this darkness.'[4]

[1] *Enoch*, xii.–xiv.

[2] *Ibid.* lx. 5, 25, lxiv., lxix. 26. Cf. Dr. Charles's note on the interpolated section in his edition of *Enoch*, p. 169.

[3] Cf. Dan. xii. 2, 'Them that sleep in the dust of the earth,' and 5 Esd. i. 31, 'Think of thy sleeping sons, whom I will rouse out of the hidden graves of the earth and show them compassion.' Cf. 2 Esd. ii. 16, 31.

[4] F. W. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*[2], Leipzig, 1897, p. 368.

Obviously, too, such a passage as Isa. lxi. 1 : 'He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound' (cf. also xlii. 7, xlix. 9), could be interpreted as of an announcement in Hades by those who thought it right that the dead should share in the spiritual benefits of the living. It could easily be applied to our Lord in that sense, for He Himself quoted the words as applicable to His ministry (S. Luke iv. 18).[1]

Such passages as have been cited are indicative of a current Jewish belief in the possibility of good news being announced to the dead. It may have helped in the formation of the Christian conception of a Preaching by Christ in Hades, but, as we shall see later, it is not impossible that this had another source, although it may have been influenced by such a Jewish belief.

[1] The apocryphon, 'We have not seen His form, but we have heard His voice,' cited by Hippolytus and Clement, is also to be considered.

CHAPTER XVI

THE RELEASE OF SOULS FROM HADES

The popular doctrine of the release of souls from Hades occurs in different forms, and there were different opinions regarding those released. As we have seen, the Preaching in Hades is accepted by nearly all the earlier Fathers, and it is regarded as the means by which salvation was brought to the expectant souls, *e.g.* in the *Epistle of the Apostles*, Ignatius, and in one of the *Odes of Solomon* (xvii.). On the other hand, the release of souls by the mere presence and power of Christ in Hades, apparently without Preaching (though this may have been assumed), is a favourite topic in the *Odes of Solomon* and in many apocryphal documents which mention the Descent—*Ascension of Isaiah*, *Teaching of Addai*, *Anaphora of Pilate*, *Gospel of Nicodemus*, *Book of the Resurrection*, the Apocryphal Acts—as well as in orthodox writers of a rhetorical kind—Gregory Thaumaturgus, Cyril of Jerusalem, Firmicus Maternus, Venantius Fortunatus, etc.[1] This aspect of the Descent, being more dramatic, was preferred by writers, preachers, poets, who could work up the incident to a rhetorical pitch or give it a realistic colouring. The earliest appearance of a release of souls apart from a Preaching in Hades is perhaps to be seen in S. Matt. xxvii. 51, 52.

As to those who benefited by the Descent, whether definitely released or not, the earliest and most general Patristic opinion,

[1] See Chapters VII. and VIII.

especially in the West, was that these were the righteous of the Old Covenant from Adam to S. John Baptist, or more vaguely the patriarchs and prophets, or the saints. This is the point of view of the *Epistle of the Apostles*, the *Odes of Solomon*, Ignatius, *Hermas*, Irenæus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and later writers. Marcion also limited the benefit, though in an inverse sense, applying it to the disobedient of the Old Testament—those who had really obeyed a higher God than the righteous; but he also included the heathen.

In course of time it came to be taught (as by Venantius Fortunatus in the sixth century, and by later writers who repeat his words) that Adam, the patriarchs, prophets, and the righteous, who were rescued by Christ, had been detained in Hades because of original sin.[1] All others, who, besides the effect of original sin, had committed actual sins, remained in Tartarus. '"Ero mors tua, O Mors," that is, Christ by His Death destroyed the enemy of the human race and gave life. "Ero morsus tuus, Inferni," partem morsit inferni pro parte eorum quos liberavit, partem reliquit pro parte eorum qui pro principalibus criminibus in tormentis remanserunt.'[2] The same idea occurs in a sermon, *de Symbolo*, attributed to S. Augustine, the passage concluding: 'He destroyed (bit, *momordit*) part of the Underworld in which were those whom He freed; part of it remained, that in which sinners were left.'[3]

On the other hand we find the opinion that the result of the Descent was much wider than a rescue of the righteous of

[1] Did this mean that the Old Testament saints had committed no actual sin? Cf. the different view of the Presbyter in Irenæus concerning their sins and need of repentance.

[2] The passage is from a commentary on the Athanasian Creed ascribed to, and almost certainly by, Fortunatus. It and other passages corresponding are given by A. E. Burn, in *TS* iv. i. pp. xlvii, lxv, 9, 37.

[3] Cf. *Gospel of Nicod.* Latin B, c. 9, 'The Saviour searched through and did bite *Infernum*.'

the Old Testament. This was first stated by Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and was adopted by other theologians. It is also found as a popular opinion. According to Clement, not only the righteous of the Old Testament but righteous Pagans were rescued from Hades by accepting the Gospel preached there by Christ or the Apostles. How far Clement taught a rescue of others than righteous heathen is uncertain, as we have seen. Origen lays stress on the rescue of the Old Testament saints, but he also included the disobedient, as well as, presumably, the heathen or those among them who were willing to be converted or whom Christ saw, for reasons known to Himself, were more adapted for this. These opinions, opposing the general theological belief in the rescue of the Old Testament saints only, are characteristic of these thinkers whose views of the after-life were so hopeful.

The reference in Hippolytus' work on the Holy Pasch to a preaching 'to those in Hades who in this life had not allowed themselves to be convinced,' is probably connected with the disobedient spirits in prison of 1 S. Pet. iii. 19. Hippolytus, however, does not follow out this wider conception, and indeed refers at the beginning of the passage to 'the host of *holy* souls' in Hades. Elsewhere he limits the benefits of the Descent to the Old Testament righteous.

Athanasius seems to take a wider view when he says that 'those who had pleased God and had been justified by the law of nature (natural law, ἐν τῷ φυσικῷ νόμῳ)' cried continually with Adam, until the mystery of redemption was revealed to them.[1]

S. Augustine's position is peculiar. Starting from the statement that Christ loosed the pains of Hades, he would not admit that the Descent concerned Abraham, the patriarchs, and prophets, who were not held by those pains, *i.e.* they were in Abraham's Bosom, the abode of secluded rest, and not a

[1] *de Salut. Advent.* 9.

part of *Infernum*. These pains held those to whom Christ had resolved to grant deliverance. Who were they? Augustine thinks it presumptuous to define, much as he would like to think of the righteous heathen receiving this benefit. He concludes vaguely that Christ delivered some whom He thought worthy of this deliverance. He did not descend in vain, yet because justice and mercy were granted to some, we must not suppose them granted to all, only to those judged worthy of that favour. These opinions occur in Augustine's *Epistle to Evodius*, and agree with his *de Genesi ad litteram*, in which he speaks of Christ's Descent to those places where sinners were tormented, some of whom He judged fit to be loosed from torments. These views doubtless chimed with Augustine's predestinarian opinions.

S. Ambrose certainly admitted a wider deliverance. Christ bore away the captives held in Hades because of Adam's transgression, or of their own sins. Every one who, having seen the Saviour in Hades, hoped for salvation from Him, was set free, as S. Peter testifies (citing 1 S. Pet. iv. 6). He recalled to life those conquered by sin. Jerome and Hilary perhaps shared these opinions.[1]

Origen's opinions were held by Eastern theologians of a much later date;[2] but nearer his own time, Cyril of Alexandria speaks of Christ 'spoiling all Hades,' 'emptying the insatiable recesses of Death,' and 'leaving the devil desolate and alone.' These statements, if rhetorical, go further than those of Origen. Cyril also cites the two Petrine passages in discussing the Descent.[3]

[1] See pp. 121, 125–26, *supra*. [2] Ussher, *Works*, iii. 303.

[3] See p. 128, *supra*. Origen himself speaks of the strong one's kingdom being devastated (p. 105), and Jerome of 'the land of death plundered and desolated' (p. 125). Yet, as has been seen, Origen did not teach a universal release of souls. The *Book of the Resurrection* tells how Christ left Amente like a desert, but Cain, Judas, and Herod remained there.

The phrase found in the *Teaching of Addai* about 'a great multitude' being raised (echoed, as we have seen in later documents), or the words of Ephrem Syrus, 'with thousands and myriads I ascended,' might mean more than the Old Testament saints.[1] The Coptic *Book of the Resurrection* speaks of all but Judas, Cain, and Herod being taken from Amente (Hades), and the Coptic *Acts of Andrew and Paul* tells how all but Judas were taken from it. Nevertheless, S. Paul, who describes this, tells how certain sinners were still tormented in places not visited by Christ. The release of souls is thus not complete, though wider than in general theological tradition.

The versions of the *Descensus* story in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* are ambiguous. S. John Baptist announces that a time of repentance is given now in Hades to those who worshipped idols in the world above and committed sins. Whosoever believes will be saved (Gk. c. 2). Hades says that if Satan brings Christ thither 'not one of the dead will be left in me' (Gk. c. 4, cf. Lat. A, 'He will set free all that are shut up here in the prison'). In Latin B, c. 9, Christ searched through and bit Hades, casting part down to Tartarus and bringing part with Him on high (presumably, on the one hand those who believed, on the other those who disbelieved). But the sections on the actual release show that this is confined to the Old Testament righteous. Christ visits that part of Hades where these are confined, but it was till then a place of gloom, though not of torments. It does not appear to be a pleasant part of Hades, like Abraham's Bosom. We do not learn where the unrighteous or the heathen are, except that S. John's announcement suggests that all are in one place. Tartarus, whither Satan is led, is lower than Hades. On the whole the description of Hades resembles that of the medieval *Limbus Patrum*, identified with Abraham's Bosom, the outer fringe of the

[1] Pp. 114, 140, *supra*.

Underworld, a place of darkness for all and of certain punishment for some. Thither, as medieval doctrine taught, Christ descended, improving the condition of the Old Testament righteous there, or removing them to a better state, leaving it empty.[1]

From the Epistle of Evodius to S. Augustine, and his reply, we gather that there was a belief, based on 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, that, as a result of Christ's Preaching in Hades, all were delivered from darkness and punishment, *Infernum* being thus completely emptied. It is hardly likely that this was merely Evodius' own opinion. Augustine would rejoice if this were true, but who can prove it? He raises objections to this opinion, and remains still asking whether Christ saved all or only some. Yet Augustine in his *de Hæresibus* regards the belief that the unbelievers in Hades believed and that Christ set all free, as a heresy, following here Philaster, bishop of Brescia (*ob. c.* 387), who speaks of heretics whose belief was that Christ preached to all in Hades that confessing Him there they might be saved.[2]

In answer to the difficulty that many now go to Hades without having heard the Gospel, Augustine mentions a suggestion which probably represents a current theory, namely, that the report of Christ's Presence in Hades had not perished from recollection there, and those dying without knowledge of the Gospel might therefore hear it there and obtain pardon and salvation, as did those to whom He preached. He rejects this on two grounds: (1) there would be no reason for mourning those who depart without grace or for being solicitous that men should believe before death; (2) if it were true, why preach the Gospel on earth. Men who despise the Gospel here will

[1] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, Q. 69, art. 4; *Elucidarium*, 64.

[2] For Evodius' Epistle and Augustine's reply, see p. 123, *supra*. Aug. *de Hær.* c. 79; Philas, *Hær.* c. 125 (Migne, *PL* xii. 1250).

despise it there, and only those who never heard it will believe it there.[1]

Gregory Nazianzen also shows that the question of whether all were saved or some only was raised in the East in the fourth century. 'Descend to Hades with Christ. Learn there the mysteries of Christ. . . . Did He simply save all, or there also those who believed?'[2] We saw how this question was answered in such a tolerant document as the *Acts of Andrew and Paul*. All were rescued, save the worst sinners, who were left in another part of Hades. Thus all those statements regarding the breaking up of Hades or its destruction must be taken as rhetorical. Part of it remained or, at least, the Tartarus which lay beneath it.

At a later time, the age of Pope Gregory the Great (end of sixth century), some still held to a complete rescue of souls, their opinion being voiced by two clergy of Constantinople, George and Theodore. Gregory wrote to them about their charitable belief that Christ in His Descent had saved all who acknowledged Him and had delivered them from the pains due to them. But He delivered only those who both believed that He was to come and observed His precepts in their lives. If believers now are not saved without good works, then if those unbelievers and reprobates who did no good works were saved by the Descent, the lot of those who never saw the Incarnation is better than that of those born since. Gregory then refers to the heresy mentioned by Philaster. Only those were rescued who, in their lifetime, were preserved by Christ in faith and good conduct.[3]

A century and a half later, the Irish missionary Clement was attacked by Boniface and condemned by a synod at Rome

[1] *Ep. ad Evod.* clxiv. 13.
[2] Greg. Naz. *Orat.* 42 *in Pasch.*
[3] Greg. *Ep.* 153.

(745 A.D.), for teaching that Christ released all detained in the Underworld, believers and unbelievers, worshippers of the true God and idolaters.[1] As a missionary, his opinion was perhaps due to some consideration for the fate of those who died ignorant of the Gospel. Again, in the ninth century, Probus, a monk of Fulda, was influenced by a similar consideration, and thought that Christ had rescued not only the saints of the Old Covenant, but the better sort of Pagans.[2]

Though Dante made Limbus, the place where the righteous heathen as well as unbaptized infants remained, a forecourt of Hell, he shows that thence Christ had gathered the Old Testament saints. Virgil had but recently passed from earth to Limbus, when, as he says :

> 'I saw a Mighty One descend,
> And on His brow the conqueror's crown did rest;
> He bade our first sire's spirit with Him wend,
> Abel, his son, and Noah, too, did bring,
> Moses, lawgiver, loyal to the end,
> Abraham the patriarch, David, too, the king,
> Israel with all his children and his sire,
> Rachel for whom he bore such suffering,
> And others whom He placed in Heaven's blest choir.' [3]

Perhaps from his wistfulness, ever and again betrayed, that the good Pagans might have been saved, the theme of the Descent occupied a considerable place in Dante's thoughts. The *Gospel of Nicodemus* would be known to him. He refers to the breaking of the gates at Christ's coming, these gates now remaining without bolts, and to the earthquake before the

[1] Boniface, *Ep.* lvii. (Migne, *PL* lxxxix. 153).

[2] J. Neander, *Church History*, Edinburgh, 1850, vi. 442. Referring to 1 S. Pet. iii. 19, Anastasius Sinaita (late seventh cent.), who took a liberal view of the Descent, says that it is told in tradition that a scholar who spoke slightingly of Plato, was visited by him in a dream. Plato bade him forbear, for 'that I was a sinful man I do not deny, but when Christ descended to Hades, no one believed in Him before I did.' Anast. Sin. *Quæstiones*, 111.

[3] *Inf.* iv. 52 f., lit. 'made them blessed.'

Descent which caused a fall of rocks even in Hell.[1] He shows that Adam remained in Limbus for four thousand three hundred and two years, after his life of nine hundred and thirty years.[2] Rahab was first of those rescued to be welcomed in Paradise in the sphere of Venus[3]—a belief otherwise unknown to tradition. S. John Baptist was in Limbus for two years before Christ descended :[4] in this Dante differs from the *Gospel of Nicodemus.*

In those passages of earlier Christian literature which insist that the righteous of the Old Testament were removed to a better state, it is not clearly stated that they were in a separate and better domain of Hades, though this was the theological belief, borrowed from Judaism, and following the parable of Dives and Lazarus. Popular documents, as we have seen, tend to represent Hades, where the righteous were, as a gloomy state, with sinners in a worse region or in Tartarus. Here we see the influence of classical belief about Hades rather than Jewish. If righteous souls were in a better part of Hades, Abraham's Bosom, what benefit was conferred on them by the Descent—a question raised by S. Augustine, who, however, thinks that Abraham's Bosom is not any integral part of *Infernum*—or to what region where they taken ? Obviously to Paradise or Heaven[5] (' to the rest in Heaven,' as the *Epistle of the Apostles*, c. 27, says) ; or Abraham's Bosom was removed elsewhere or became more like Paradise. Yet some of the writers who speak of a liberation of souls from Hades make no definite statement regarding the region to which they were taken, *e.g.* the *Odes of Solomon*, Ignatius (' raised them from the dead '), *Hermas* (entrance into the Kingdom of God), Cyprian, Hippolytus (' on high '), Clement of Alexandria (' a better state ').

[1] *Inf.* viii. 125, xii. 36, xxi. 112, xxiii. 136.
[2] *Purg.* xxxiii. 61, *Par.* xxvi. 119.
[3] *Par.* ix. 118.
[4] *Ibid.* xxxii. 31 f.
[5] Cf. the belief of those Christians opposed by Tertullian, p. 267, *infra.*

Others speak of the souls going to Heaven—Gregory Nazianzen, Prudentius, Firmicus Maternus, Ambrose, Jerome (or the Heavenly Jerusalem), the *Ascension of Isaiah*, the *Teaching of Addai*, the *Questions of Bartholomew* (the Heavenly Jerusalem), Pseudo-Epiphanius (Heaven or the Heavenly Paradise). Origen speaks of transference to a Paradise *in terra* or to the Heavenly Jerusalem; Ephrem Syrus of Eden or the dwelling of life. The *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the Homilies of Eusebius of Alexandria describe the removal of the saints to Paradise.

On the whole, we may assume that the transference of souls was to Paradise, whether on earth or in one of the Heavens, or to a Heavenly region. Connected with this was the belief that Hades as a dwelling for the righteous dead was now done away, and that faithful Christians would enter Paradise or Heaven at death, to await the Resurrection. This belief that faithful Christians did not go to Hades was opposed by Justin, Irenæus, and Tertullian, who accepted the view that Hades was still a twofold state, of preliminary bliss for the good, of preliminary woe for the evil. Their views, and their opinion regarding the effect of Christ's Descent, deserve examination.

Justin held that souls at death await the Resurrection and the Judgment, some, the righteous, somewhere in a better state; some, the unrighteous and evil, in a worse state—evidently Hades divided into two parts. But souls of martyrs alone attain a Heavenly reward.[1] Justin says nothing of a transference of souls from Hades as a result of the Descent and of Christ's preaching His salvation to them. He argues against so-called Christians who say that there is no Resurrection, and that their souls are taken to Heaven as soon as they die. 'Do not imagine they are Christians.'[2] These were probably Marcionite Gnostics.

[1] Justin, *Dial.* c. 5; *Apol.* ii. 2, *Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs.*
[2] Justin, *Dial.* c. 80.

Irenæus opposed not only the Gnostics, who denied the Resurrection and believed in the soul's immediate entrance into the Pleroma at death, but also certain Catholics, 'thought to have believed aright,' who were influenced by Gnostic views or, more probably, by Hellenistic opinions of the soul's destiny. They did not believe in the Resurrection, and held that the soul went to a heavenly place (*in supercœlestem locum*) at death.[1] Irenæus based his argument on Christ's Descent to Hades. He, on dying, did not go to Heaven, but abode for three days in the place of the dead, as the Jeremiah apocryphon and other passages show.[2] If He observed the law of the dead, going to where the souls of the dead were, and only after that rose, 'evidently the souls of His disciples also, for whom He wrought these things, go into an invisible place appointed for them by God, and there abide even until the Resurrection.' For the disciple must not be above his Master, and as He rose after the time appointed by the Father, so must we await the time of our Resurrection appointed by God.[3] Thus Christians do not at once go to Heaven at death, but to an invisible place, which is presumably a better part of Hades; but on this point Irenæus is not quite clear. It is also a little difficult to learn whether he and the Presbyter quoted by him held that the Old Testament saints had been removed from Hades as a result of the Descent.

As the disciple must be as his Master, Christians, at death, go to Hades, the better part of it, or to the invisible place appointed by God. In an earlier part of his work, Irenæus speaks of the parable of Dives and Lazarus, which shows, *inter*

[1] Iren. v. 31. 1 f.

[2] As Justin regarded such Pagans as Socrates as Christians, and deemed that they would be saved through Christ in the Resurrection along with Noah, Enoch, etc., it is possible that they also were in the better region of Hades (*Apol.* i. 46; *Dial.* c. 45).

[3] v. 31. 2.

alia, that 'each sort of people receive their meet habitation, even before the judgment,' one of these being Abraham's Bosom.[1] It might therefore be assumed that the 'invisible place' is Abraham's Bosom.[2] After the Judgment, the final places of reward for the righteous, as the Presbyters say, are Heaven, Paradise, and the Heavenly City.[3] This final Paradise is perhaps the same as the Paradise from which Adam was 'cast out into this world.' Though it was planted 'eastward in Eden,' it is apparently in the third Heaven, or it is the earthly Paradise heightened and removed from earth. To it Enoch was translated, 'prefiguring the translation of the righteous,' and Elijah was taken up, 'prophesying the assumption of them that are spiritual.' 'Hence the Presbyters, the disciples of the apostles, say that those who are translated are translated thither—inasmuch as for righteous men and Spirit-bearers Paradise is prepared (wherein Paul being introduced heard words unspeakable, at least, to us in this present), and there those who are translated remain until the consummation, making a beginning of incorruption.'[4]

It is hardly likely, as C. Schmidt asserts,[5] that this Paradise corresponds to the 'invisible place' whither righteous souls go at death. But it is perhaps the place to which martyrs (Spirit-bearers ?) go at death, for these are exempt from Hades. 'The Church in every place . . . is at all times sending forward a multitude of martyrs to the Father,' just as Christ sent the Holy Innocents before Him into His Kingdom.[6]

The point of Irenæus's argument regarding the condition of

[1] ii. 34. 1. [2] Cf. Atzberger, *Eschatologie*, p. 245.

[3] v. 36. 1. In v. 20. 2 Irenæus speaks of 'the Paradise of life, into which Christ brings those who obey His instruction.'

[4] v. 5. 1; cf. iii. 23. 6. In v. 20. 2 the Church, planted in the world, is said to be a Paradise.

[5] C. Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 497, note 1.

[6] iv. 33. 9, iii. 16. 4; cf. iv. 31. 3.

Christians after death being that, as Christ was in Hades, so all Christians (martyrs excepted) go thither, we would expect that the Old Testament saints are still there. If the 'invisible place' is a better part of Hades, as indeed the argument, otherwise inexplicable, supposes, then all is clear. But Irenæus's statements regarding the Old Testament saints are ambiguous. Christ awakened and raised them (*excitavit et erexit*), yet immediately after he says that they are to be raised from sleep at the second coming before the rest (*i.e.* dead Christians). Christ will awaken both them and the rest, who will be judged, and will give them a part in His Kingdom.[1] The only difference between the Old Testament saints and dead Christians is that the latter will be judged. This assumes that all are in one place. Does then the first *excitavit et erexit* refer to Christ's preaching, enlightening, and baptizing in Hades, not to a removal thence? Yet again, in his citations of the Jeremiah apocryphon, Irenæus makes additions of his own in three of these. Christ descended 'that He might deliver and save them' (iv. 33. 1); 'that He might raise them up to save them' (iv. 33. 12); 'to draw them out and save them' (v. 31. 1). So also in his *Epideixis* (c. 78), after quoting the apocryphon, he adds: 'His Descent into Hades was for the deliverance of the dead.' Unless these additions are to be taken metaphorically, they can only mean some change of condition, signifying a removal from Hades, or from its state of gloom.[2] Where the saints were removed to is not certain. Not to Heaven, for that would not be in keeping with Irenæus's chiliastic beliefs.

[1] iv. 22. 1.

[2] 'By this deliverance of the dead was understood—and Irenæus is no exception—in the second century, something definite and real, the freeing of the souls of the righteous from Hades' (Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 497). But it is not so certain that Irenæus was no exception. Cf. Atzberger, p. 247: 'Irenæus narrowed the meaning of the Descent to a simple preaching of the remission of sins wrought by Christ's first coming, without a freeing of souls from Hades.'

Probably, then, to the 'invisible place,' either a better part of Hades or, less likely, Paradise, where Enoch and Elijah are, and which is prepared for the righteous and Spirit-bearers.

The position of the Presbyter cited by Irenæus (iv. 27. 2) with regard to the release of Old Testament saints from Hades is equally uncertain. To them was announced the good news of His coming by Christ; they received remission of sins. But were they removed from Hades? This is not definitely stated. The phrase, 'they give thanks and exult in salvation' (iv. 31. 1), is taken by C. Schmidt to mean, 'not that they thank God in Hades, but that they through Christ's coming have attained eternal bliss.'[1]

Tertullian states his views on the result of the Descent very emphatically, denying that the patriarchs and prophets were removed from the Underworld (*inferi*). To it all souls depart at death, and thither Christ went, spending three days in the heart of the earth. It is 'a vast, deep place in the interior of the earth . . . overlying the abyss, still lower down.' There souls anticipate their final fate—the good receive *refrigeria*, the wicked *supplicia*, in Abraham's Bosom or in the fire. In the prison or lodging of the Underworld even the good may require to undergo some 'compensatory discipline,' paying the 'uttermost farthing' for small offences. What benefit, then, accrued to the Old Testament saints by the Descent? According to Tertullian, they were made 'partakers of Christ'—*compotes sui facere*, they were made to know Him, presumably through His preaching to them. The knowledge of their redemption was given to them.[2]

Thus the Old Testament saints were not removed from

[1] Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 481.

[2] *de Anima*, cc. 7, 55, 58. In c. 55 he refers to a treatise on 'Paradise,' now lost, in which he proves that every soul is detained in safe keeping in the Underworld until the Judgment.

Hades, and Christians at death (except martyrs) must go there. Christ's Descent has made no difference in this respect. Heaven is shut to all until the end of the world. None but martyrs get a lodging in Paradise—*paradiso scilicet non inferis deversurus.*[1] Paradise is defined elsewhere as 'a place of Divine pleasantness, appointed to receive the spirits of the saints, separated by a wall or fiery zone from the knowledge of this world.'[2]

In supporting this position, Tertullian opposes two sets of Christians. First, those who are too proud to believe that the souls of the faithful deserve a place in the Underworld, and spurn to believe that they must still look forward, in Abraham's Bosom, to the Resurrection. They held that Christ descended to Hades that we might not have to go there, for what difference would there then be between Christians and pagans if the same prison (*carcer*) awaited them at death? They believed that they would go to Paradise, whither already the patriarchs and prophets have migrated from the Underworld in the retinue of the Lord's Resurrection (*appendices dominicæ resurrectionis*). If that be so, replies Tertullian, how is it that in S. John's vision of Paradise—'under the altar'—there were none but souls of martyrs? How was it that Perpetua, in her vision, saw only martyrs there, if it were not that the sword which guards the entrance permitted none to enter save those who had died 'in Christ' (*i.e.* as martyrs), not 'in Adam' (*i.e.* otherwise than as martyrs)? 'The sole key to unlock Paradise is your own life's blood.'[3]

The other group of Christians whom Tertullian opposes was apparently composed of those who admitted that all souls go to Hades, but that they experienced neither punishments nor refreshment there, as foretastes of eternal bliss or woe, the soul

[1] *de Resur. Carnis*, c. 43.
[2] *Apol.* c. 47.
[3] *de Anima*, c. 55.

not yet being clad with a Resurrection body. Tertullian's reply is based on his theory of the corporeality of the soul, and on the parable of Dives and Lazarus—the one suffering, the other experiencing refreshment in Hades. The soul does not sleep in Hades, neither is it unaware of its final state, being able to experience a foretaste of bliss or woe.[1]

Tertullian's emphatic denial that the Old Testament saints had been removed from Hades—'But what is that which is transferred *ad inferna* after the separation of the body, *which is there detained, which is reserved to the Day of Judgment*, to which also Christ, in dying, descended? I think, to the souls of the patriarchs'[2]—shows that he differed from the general opinion of his time.

In arguing against Marcion, who held that the souls of Christian Gnostics went directly to a heavenly state, but that the God of the Old Testament sent righteous and wicked alike to Hades, Tertullian tends to remove Abraham's Bosom from the Underworld, where he locates it in the works above cited. 'The Underworld (*inferi*) is, I think, one place, Abraham's Bosom is another,' separated from each other by a great gulf. To Abraham's Bosom Dives lifted up his eyes, from afar off; obviously, then, this must suggest a vast difference of height and depth. This region called Abraham's Bosom is designed for the reception of the souls of Abraham's children, even from among the Gentiles. Though not in Heaven, it is higher than the Underworld, appointed to afford an interim refreshment to the souls of the righteous, until the consummation of all things. It is a temporary receptacle of faithful souls.[3] Perhaps the exigency of controversy forced Tertullian here to remove Abraham's Bosom from the Underworld; elsewhere he is most

[1] *de Anima*, c. 58. [2] *Ibid.* c. 7.

[3] *adv. Marcionem*, iv. 34. The metrical *adv. Marcion.*, attributed to Tertullian, places it *sub corpore terræ*.

explicit as to its being a part of it,[1] and perhaps here he means no more than that it is a higher stage of it, separated from it in so far as it is a place of punishment.

We have seen that Hippolytus seems to assume a removal of the Old Testament saints from Hades. But in the fragment of the writing, *On the Universe*, ascribed to him, the description of Hades there given shows that all souls from the beginning, good and bad, are still in Hades. If the writing is actually by Hippolytus, this would suggest that his references to the Descent did not contemplate a removal of souls, or, as C. Schmidt supposes, that Hippolytus, influenced by Tertullian, had changed his opinion. The account of Hades may be cited as showing the belief entertained by a section of the Church, influenced by the Jewish conception of the Intermediate State. Hades is a subterranean region in which the light of this world does not shine. It is a guard-house for souls, of whom angels are the guards, distributing temporal punishments suitable to each one's deeds.[2] Within Hades is another region, the lake of unquenchable fire, prepared for the Day of Judgment, where the wicked shall suffer eternal punishment. The righteous will then obtain an incorruptible and unfading kingdom. Meanwhile they are in Hades, but not in the same place as the wicked. There is a way down to Hades, and at its gate stands an archangel with his hosts. The angels conduct righteous souls to a place on the right hand, full of light, where dwell all who were righteous from the beginning. There they contemplate their joys, and delight in the expectation of others to come. They know no toils, no fierce heat or cold, and this place is called Abraham's Bosom. The wicked are forcibly conducted

[1] *de Anima*, cc. 7, 55, 58; *de Resur. Carnis*, c. 17; *de Idolat.* c. 13; *de Jejunis*, c. 16.

[2] This does not appear to concern righteous souls, but if it does, it would correspond to Tertullian's 'compensatory discipline' which some of the good undergo in Hades.

by angels to the left, near the lake of fire, and there they have a foretaste of their eternal woe, reproached by the angels of punishment and threatened by their terrible looks. They hear the noise of Gehenna and are troubled by its hot vapour. They are punished also by seeing the choir of the fathers and the righteous. Between the two places is a great chasm. Thus in Hades are confined and detained the souls of all until the time determined by God for the Resurrection.[1]

Other theologians who followed Tertullian in believing that Hades was the Intermediate State of all souls are found mainly in the Western Church. Novatian says that souls of the good and of the evil are led to a subterranean place where they know preliminary indications of the future judgment.[2] Lactantius teaches that all souls are detained in one common place of ward (*custodia*), until the time comes when the Supreme Judge will investigate their merits.[3] Hilary says that souls of the faithful are reserved in the keeping of the Lord against the time of entrance to the Heavenly Kingdom. They are in Abraham's Bosom. Here the wicked cannot enter because of the *chaos* between the two. This is the law of human necessity that while bodies are buried, souls descend, and he cites the parable of Dives and Lazarus as a proof of this.[4] This is, in part, the opinion of Ambrose, who, following 4 Esdras, says that souls at death go into *promptuaria*, where some suffer pain, some joy. Yet some elect souls enter Paradise, where are the souls of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs.[5] Jerome at different times speaks differently of the lot of the soul after death. Now he says that righteous souls enter Heaven;

[1] *Die griech. christl. Schriftsteller*, i. 2. 46 f.
[2] Novatian, *de Trin.* c. 1.
[3] Lactantius, *Inst. Div.* iii. 21.
[4] Hilary, *Enar. in Ps.* 120, *in Ps.* 138, *in Ps.* 2.
[5] Ambrose, *de Bono Mortis*, c. 10; *in Ps.* 118, *Sermo* xx. 12; *de Excessu Fratris*, ii. 94.

wicked souls suffer, but not as they will do after the Judgment; now that the *infernus locus* is the place in which souls are shut up, either in refreshment or in punishment, according to their merits.[1]

Perhaps the belief that all souls went to Hades was determined by the Millenarian views of those who held it—a thousand years' kingdom of Christ on earth to which the righteous would rise from Hades.[2] There would have been no sense in bringing them from the bliss of Heaven to this. At all events the belief was mainly held by Chiliasts. In one sense it was archaic, in so far as it continued Jewish belief; in another, as far as Justin, Irenæus, and Tertullian were concerned, it was an innovating view,[3] for the Church generally believed that the souls of Christians were exempt from Hades as a result of the Descent. These writers, however, believed in the prerogative of martyrs who go to a heavenly Paradise or reign with Christ.

Some who spoke of a release of souls, still also speak of the righteous going at death to Abraham's Bosom, *e.g.* Hilary, Jerome (whose views vary as has been seen), and Ambrose (though he held that some of the righteous go to Paradise). Eastern theologians, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, speak of souls going to Paradise or Heaven, though Gregory of Nyssa and Chrysostom can still speak of Abraham's Bosom as the place of the righteous.[4] Here, as in prayers for the departed in the *Apostolic Constitutions*,[5] Abraham's Bosom, or 'The Bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,' is probably Paradise and is not a part of Hades, as also some Western theologians seem to indicate.[6] Perhaps

[1] *Ep.* xxiii. 3, xxxix. 3; *Comm. in Daniel.* vii. 9; *in Osee*, c. 13.
[2] Cf. J. von Dollinger, *Hippolytus and Callistus*, Edinburgh, 1876, p. 330.
[3] Cf. Loofs, *ERE* iv. 661.
[4] Cf. J. Tixeront, *Histoire des dogmas*[3], Paris, 1909, ii. 196, 219.
[5] *Ap. Const.* viii. 41. 2.
[6] Cf. Prudentius, *Cathæmerinon*, Hymn 10.

this was because Abraham's Bosom was situated in a region above, separated from the Underworld.[1] Augustine sometimes speaks of righteous souls being with God, as the martyrs are, but he speaks also of their being in hidden receptacles according to their fitness for rest or punishment.[2] In certain writings he regarded Abraham's Bosom, which he here identifies with Paradise, as part of Hades ; but again he refuses to regard it as being there.[3]

The consequences of the release of souls were not always clearly worked out in relation to the state of the righteous after death. If the Old Testament saints were in Abraham's Bosom in Hades, and had been removed thence to Paradise, then the righteous would naturally also go to Paradise. But we see Abraham's Bosom still spoken of as the place of the righteous. This could only mean that it was regarded as not now being a part of Hades, or that it never had been. But if it never had been, then had Christ removed the Old Testament saints to a still higher state, or had His Descent not affected them ? This was the problem which Augustine, and apparently no one else, had seen. Tertullian and others were logical in claiming that the better part of Hades was still the intermediate state of the Old Testament saints and of the righteous Christians after death. The general view, however, was that the Old Testament saints had been removed to a higher state, by whatever name that might be called, and that righteous Christians shared this state with them.

In the West, with the growing doctrine of Purgatory after Augustine's time, it was clearly stated that all righteous souls not detained in Purgatory, entered upon celestial bliss, which would be augmented at the Resurrection.[4]

[1] Cf. Ussher, *Works*, iii. 282, 293–94. [2] Cf. Tixeront, ii. 430.
[3] See *Ep.* clxxxvii. as against *Ep.* clxiv. and cf. *de Gen. ad litt.* xii. 34.
[4] Cf. J. Tixeront, *Histoire des dogmas*[3], Paris, 1912, iii. 427–28, 431.

Where was Paradise situated ? Many of those who believed that the souls of the righteous passed at death to Paradise, as well as those who held that they would not go there till the end of all things, regarded it as in Heaven or the Third Heaven, though perhaps not the final Heavenly state. We find this in 2 Cor. xii. 4, in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, in S. Perpetua's Vision, and it was a widespread belief, entertained by such theologians as S. Athanasius, S. Chrysostom, the two Gregories, Ephrem Syrus, S. Jerome, etc. Here Enoch and Elijah had been translated, as in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, where it is the final abode of the righteous, or in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, whither also those rescued from Hades are taken (but is it here in Heaven ?). Sometimes this heavenly Paradise was regarded as that from which Adam had been ejected into this world, as in Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen.[1] These, the last certainly, distinguish between a Heavenly and an Earthly (though hidden) Paradise.

Others placed Paradise on this earth, *i.e.* the Paradise from which Adam had been ejected, and to which redeemed men would be restored after the Resurrection. This was the teaching of Theophilus of Antioch (*ob. c.* 183–185) and of Methodius of Patara. The former says that it was mystically written in Genesis (ii. 8, 15) that man was twice placed there. The second placing will not occur until the Resurrection. Methodius opposed Origen's view that man had been cast forth from a Paradise in Heaven. He also interprets 2 Cor. xii. 2 ff., as signifying that the third Heaven is one place and Paradise another (as does Irenæus).[2] Tertullian says that Paradise is 'a place of Divine pleasantness destined for the spirits of

[1] Iren. v. 5. 1 ; in ii. 30. 7 Irenæus seems to speak of two raptures of S. Paul, one to the third Heaven, one to Paradise, but where is this Paradise ? Tert. *de Patientia*, c. 5 ; Origen, *Comm. in Rom.* v. 4.

[2] Theophilus, *ad Autol.* ii. 24, 26 ; Methodius, *de Resur.* in Epiphanius, *Hær.* lxiv. 47, cf. Atzberger, p. 481,

saints, segregated by a fiery zone (the torrid zone from which it lies south) from the knowledge of the common world.'[1] In his *de Anima* (c. 55), he places it 'under the altar,' but the locality is not further defined, though Paradise in Perpetua's Vision, which he here cites also, was in Heaven. Hippolytus, opposing those who placed Paradise in Heaven, says that it is on earth, for the rivers which flow from it can be seen (so Methodius and Theophilus). From it Adam was ejected, and it will be the future dwelling of the saints, who will enjoy the tree of life, which is Christ, with Adam and the righteous.[2] Origen also speaks of a Paradise in a certain place set on the earth, an *auditorium* or a school of souls for saints who depart this life. There they receive instruction on all things seen on earth and on future things. Thence they ascend to an aerial region, and so through the spheres of the Heavens, till they are united with Christ.[3]

There are also traces of a belief that Paradise on earth, usually towards the East (Gen. ii. 8, 'eastward in Eden'), is already that to which the righteous have been restored, though whether as a result of the Descent is not stated. Near it, but separated from it, is the region of punishment. On the whole this view corresponds to that which placed contiguous happy and wretched regions in Hades. The descriptions of this earthly Paradise are romantic and full of charm. We find them first in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, where Paradise is 'outside this world,' and over against it is the place of punishment.[4] The Vision of Saturus, the North African martyr, shows Paradise as a spacious place in the East with a glorious city (Perpetua's Vision is of a heavenly Paradise).[5] Nothing is

[1] Tert. *Apol.* c. 47, cf. *de Resur. Carnis*, c. 26, and Lactantius, ii. 12.
[2] Hippol. *adv. Judæos*, c. 2, *de Antichr.* c. 64, *in Prov.* xi. 30.
[3] Origen, *de Principiis*, ii. 11. 5, 6.
[4] *Ap. of Peter*, in James, p. 508.
[5] *TS* i. 2.

said of a place of punishment. In the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the earthly Paradise, where souls of the righteous go at death, is by Oceanus, the river-sea that waters all the earth and surrounds it. It is to be manifest when earth is dissolved, as the scene of Christ's millennial reign. Across Oceanus lies the dark place of punishment. The heavenly Paradise in the third Heaven, where Enoch and Elijah are, is the final abode of the good.[1] A similar picture is found in *Barlaam and Josaphat*.[2]

These various beliefs about Paradise already existed in Jewish documents. A Paradise which is to be revealed at the last and which is prepared for the righteous, though sometimes described as the present abode of Enoch and Elijah, is found in the *Testament of the XII Patriarchs* (*Test. Levi*, xviii. 10), in some of the sections of the *Book of Enoch* (xxiv. 4, xxv. 4, xxxii. 3), in the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (viii. 3, lxv. 1), and in 4 Esdras (vii. 36, viii. 52). It is either on earth, eastwards, or in the third Heaven. Again, Paradise as an intermediate abode of the righteous, whether on earth or in the third Heaven or mingled with both, occurs in the *Apocalypse of Moses* (xxxv. 2, xxxvii. 5) and in the *Book of Enoch* (lx. 8, lxi. 2, lxx. 2 f., lxxxix. 52). In several of the descriptions of Paradise in these books, we hear of the Tree of Life with its oil and its fruits. Where Paradise is a future abode of the righteous, they are meanwhile in an intermediate abode in Sheol. This is described in the *Book of Enoch* as being within mountains in the West. There is a bright place, with a fountain of clear water, for the righteous. Other hollow places there are for sinners (*Enoch* xxii., li. 1). The abode of the righteous in Sheol is described in 4 Esdras (iv. 35 f., vii. 32, 95) as *promptuaria* or

[1] *Apoc. of Paul*, cc. 20, 21 ff., 31.

[2] Migne, *PG* xcvi. 1050, cf. my *Early Christian Visions of the Other-World*, chapter viii,

'chambers,' or, as in 2 Baruch (xxi. 23, xxiii. 4, xxx. 2), 'treasuries,' where they are guarded. At the Resurrection these will be opened and the souls will come forth, but meanwhile the pious Jew expected to be gathered to the fathers—the patriarchs—in these intermediate abodes. This corresponds, on the whole, to the description of Hades, with its twofold abodes—Abraham's Bosom and a place of torment—in the parable (S. Luke xvi. 19 ff.).[1]

The Alexandrian Jews, on the other hand, influenced by Greek views of immortality, believed that the righteous at death, when the soul left the body, regarded as a prison, went to Heaven. Hence, for them, there was no intermediate place of waiting.[2]

In Jewish and in medieval as well as earlier Christian eschatology, the belief that the earthly Paradise still existed, is found. S. Augustine seems to regard this as a necessary belief.[3] Its hidden situation was constantly discussed in the Middle Ages.[4] But there was a tendency to confuse the earthly and the heavenly Paradise. In the *Apocalypse of Moses* the two are separate, and Adam's soul is taken to a Paradise in the third Heaven. But in the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (xxxi. 2) the eastern Paradise is open to the Heavens, perhaps, as Dr. Charles suggests, because the foundations of the concentric arching Heavens lay on Ocean's stream, where Paradise was, as in Babylonian belief. In an earlier part of the same book (chap. viii.), the Paradise of Eden is watered by four streams

[1] Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* xviii. 1. 3. In S. Luke xvi. 24, the reference to water implies its existence in the better part of Sheol. This is found also in *Enoch* xxii., a fountain of clear water. Cf. also H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, Munich, 1924, ii. 231.

[2] Cf. Wisdom iii. 1 f., 4 Maccabees, *passim*, Josephus, *Wars*, iii. 8. 5.

[3] Aug. *de Gratia primi Hominis*, c. 14.

[4] See S. Baring Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, London, 1888, pp. 250 ff.

flowing down from Paradise in the third Heaven. Hence it also was ' open ' to the Heavens. There must, however, have been a Rabbinic belief or an old myth that the Paradise whence Adam was ejected was in Heaven. Thence he had been cast down to earth, but to it man would eventually be restored. This was the belief of Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen,[1] and of some Valentinian Gnostics who held that man was created in the third Heaven or Paradise by the Demiurge and his angels. But when they found that he was higher than they thought, they thrust him down to earth, and clad his psychic body in a material one—the ' coats of skin ' of Gen. iii. 21.[2]

With these traditions may be compared others found in early writings about a mysterious land hidden in the East, yet accessible to occasional visitors. There dwell, not souls of the dead, but living men, identified with the lost ten tribes. This is found in the *Narratio Zosimi*, the *Acts of Matthew*, in Commodion's *Instructiones* (ii. 1. 20 f.) and *Carmen Apologeticum* (941 f.), and in the Ethiopic *Conflicts of the Holy Apostles*. These traditions are akin to, and perhaps connected with, the Persian myth of Yima's Vara or ' Enclosure,' from which, after the earth and its inhabitants have been destroyed, it would be repeopled. This myth was certainly borrowed by Mandæism, and hence may have influenced Christian tradition. Akin also to the Persian myth are Teutonic tales, none of them early, of heroes who set out to seek Odainsakr or the Land of Living Men in the East. This is perhaps to be identified with the Eddic Mimir's Grove, where dwell Lif and Lifthrasir, progenitors of the new race which will people the new earth. These Teutonic myths have borrowed many details from the

[1] Iren. *adv. Hær.* v. 5. 1 ; Tert. *de Patientia*, c. 5 ; Origen, *Comm. in Rom.* v. 4, *contra Celsum*, iv. 40. Tatian also believed that man fell from a higher Paradise, *Oratio*, 20.

[2] Clement, *Strom.* ii. 8, iii. 14 ; Iren. v. 5. 2, 5. The Rabbis taught that man lost his glory by the Fall, and received a dull, fleshly body.

myth of Paradise. Whether the Persian Vara and the Teutonic Mimir's Grove represent some common belief of the Indo-European people, as Böklen supposes, is uncertain. Slavonic tradition knew also of a happy Eastern land tenanted by the Rakmane (=the Brahmans). Tales of travellers in India have here influenced some older myth of a wonder-land.[1]

In S. Luke xvi. 23 Abraham's Bosom is synonymous with the better part of Hades. Whence did this belief arise? In Jewish literature Adam, Enoch, Abel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have a high position and functions in the Other World. In the *Testament of Abraham* (c. 11) (which probably belongs to the second century A.D.), Adam sits at the first gate of Heaven, where there are two ways, one to Paradise, one to destruction. He rejoices when many souls go through the former, and laments when many go through the latter. Within the gates sits Abel with books before him, and exercises a preliminary judgment upon souls (cc. 12, 13).[2] In the shorter recension of the *Testament* (c. 9), this position is allotted to Enoch, who is also scribe of judgment in the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (xl. 13, liii. 2, lxiv. 5) and in the *Book of Jubilees* (iv. 23, x. 17). Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, were privileged to visit the Other World, to see and recount its secrets. Enoch and Elijah occupy a place in the Paradise prepared for the final bliss of the righteous. In many documents—Jewish, Jewish-Christian, or Christian—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are prominent in the regions of bliss. Thus in 4 Macc. xiii. 17, the righteous who die for their faith are received by them. Parallel to this is our Lord's saying about the future: 'Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven' (S. Matt.

[1] See the articles on 'Blest, Abode of the' (Persian, Slavonic, Teutonic), in Hastings' *ERE* vol. ii.

[2] Text in *TS* ii. 2, ed. M. R. James.

viii. 11). In the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* these patriarchs are specially mentioned among those who beg the Lord to have mercy on souls in torment.[1] In the *Apocalypse of Paul* (c. 27), they and other saints salute the souls of the humane and the receivers of pilgrims in Paradise by a river of wine (cf. c. 47). All three are seen in Paradise in the *Acts of Andrew and Matthias*, and are brought from the tomb to confute the Jews who refuse to believe that our Lord had seen and known Abraham.

Among the others, Abraham is pre-eminent, probably because of his greater righteousness and power of intercession for righteous men (Gen. xviii. 23 f.). The idea comprised in the phrase 'Abraham's Bosom' is expressed differently in other documents. Thus in the *Testament* he intercedes for his dead servants, for a neutral soul, and for the sinners whom he has cursed, and who are now brought back to life (cc. 14, 18). Michael also says to God: 'Thou didst create Abraham to have pity on the souls of all men' (recension B, c. 4). In *Bereschit Rabba* the following passage occurs: 'R. Levi said, Abraham will sit in future at the gates of Hell, and not permit one who is circumcised to enter.' Sinners he hurls down to Hell.[2] In recension A of the *Testament of Abraham* (c. 20) we read: 'Take Abraham to Paradise, where are the tabernacles of My righteous ones and the abodes of My saints Isaac and Jacob in his bosom.' Here Abraham's Bosom occurs, though with a certain confusion of thought.

As used by our Lord, the phrase 'Abraham's Bosom' betokens the intimate communion existing between Abraham and his descendants in the Other World, the idea being that of a mother folding her child in her bosom (cf. S. John i. 18, 'in the bosom of the Father'), or, as future blessedness is sometimes expressed as a feast, it suggests reclining at the meal, the head

[1] G. Steindorf, *TU* n.f., ii. 3a.

[2] Cited in A. F. Gfrörer, *Das Jahrhundert des Heils*[2], Stuttgart, 1838, p. 78.

of one being near the bosom of another (cf. S. John xiii. 23).[1] As the name of the better part of Sheol or Hades, it does not occur in contemporary Jewish literature, though there are later examples of its use ;[2] but it must have conveyed a definite idea to Christ's hearers, and its use suggests familiarity. In any case, the phrases 'to go to the fathers,' 'to be received by the fathers,' or 'to be gathered' to them, are analogous, and occur, *e.g.*, in 4 Macc. (v. 37, xiii. 17, xviii. 23) and 2 Bar. (lxxxv. 9), and correspond to Old Testament phrases (Gen. xv. 15, xlvii. 30; Deut. xxxi. 16). The name, as we have seen, passed over into Christian use, to describe the better part of Hades, as in Tertullian, or as a synonym of Paradise. There is no evidence, however, that contemporary Jewish thought described the better part of Sheol as 'Gan Eden' (='Paradise').[3] While some Jews regarded Abraham and the fathers of their race as already in Paradise (a view taken in some of the early Christian visions of the Other World), the older and more general view was that they were still in a region of Hades ; and this is borne witness to by the parable itself. The high position given to Abraham and others is suggestive of ancestor worship in its origin.[4]

The views of Irenæus and Tertullian did not prevail, and the general opinion of a removal of the Old Testament saints to Paradise continued through the Middle Ages.[5] Here may be cited from the *Acts of Philip* an interesting parallel to the

[1] Strack and Billerbeck, *op. cit.* ii. 225.

[2] *Ibid.* ii. 226.

[3] *Ibid.* ii. 227. Much later, a Latin Homily ascribed to S. Chrysostom (*in Luc.* c. 16) could speak of Abraham's Bosom in Hades as 'the poor man's Paradise,' 'a most holy Paradise' (quoted in Ussher, *Works*, iii. 296). That sinners see the righteous in Sheol, and *vice versa* (S. Luke xvi. 23 f.), is found also in 4 Esd. vii. 85, 93. For a note on Abraham's Bosom, see M. R. James in *TS* ii. 2. 72 f., 128 f.

[4] See R. Winterbotham, 'The Cultus of Father Abraham,' in *Expositor*, ii. [1896] 177 ff.

[5] See citations from early medieval commentaries on the Athanasian Creed in A. E. Burn, *TS* iv. [1876] 1, *passim*.

release of souls at the Descent. Philip, while hung downwards in the city of Ophiorma Hierapolis, prays that the abyss may open and swallow the ungodly who have thus treated him. Thousands disappear, and from Hades they pray to God for mercy because the cross has now enlightened them. A voice is heard : ' I will be merciful to you in the cross of light.' Christ now appears to Philip, rebukes him for his prayer against his enemies, and announces that he will bring them up from the dead. He stretches out His hand and marks a cross in the air, coming down from above, even to the abyss. It was full of light and had the form of a ladder. On this luminous cross the multitude who had been swallowed up now ascend from the abyss and receive the Christian verity.[1] This illustrates the Gnostic identification of Christ with the cross, whether the Æon Stauros (Cross), a phantasmal or mystic cross, or the actual cross, as in the *Gospel of Peter*. But the enlightenment by the cross in Hades recalls the incident in *Nicodemus* of Christ's leaving His cross there.

We now inquire whether this early tradition of the rescue of souls from Hades, which took such a hold of Christian imagination, owes its inception to Pagan myths. It is not easy to find any *immediate* mythical parallels. The doctrine has been traced to such myths as that of the rescue of Eurydice by Orpheus, of Alcestis by Heracles, of Tammuz by Ištar, of Ištar by Uddushunamir, or to others which resemble them, but especially to that of Orpheus and to the Orphic teaching in general.[2] There are obvious difficulties in this theory. First, the Descent in such myths is made to rescue one person and to bring him or her back to renewed earthly existence. Second, the Descent is made by a mythical living hero, not by the soul of an actual dead person. These facts, but especially the

[1] *Acts of Philip*, c. 131 f.
[2] See P. Gardner, *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 272.

second, seem fatal to the theory of borrowing. Babylonian influences are out of the question, since they could have affected Christianity through Judaism only, and contemporary Judaism knew nothing of a Messiah who would preach to the dead, nor indeed does it show any trace of influence from the Ištar myth. As to the Mandæan myth of Hibil Ziwa which, according to Pfleiderer, echoed by Cheyne,[1] tells of a deliverance of spirits of the good and of a leading them up to the world of light, we have seen that this is to read into it what it does not contain. The Descent is made to overcome powers of darkness and to prevent their future attack upon the worlds of light. Man is not yet created: there are no souls imprisoned and, consequently, no release of them, and the worlds of darkness contain no place of punishment. Following upon this Descent, the *Tractate* tells of the creation of the world and of man. Souls are brought, not from any Underworld, but out of 'the treasure of the Great Light' in the world of Light, and placed in the body of Adam.[2] Obviously the assertion of influence from this myth is based on a complete misunderstanding of its contents.

We turn now to the Hindu and Buddhist Descent myths. Here there is greater likeness to the Christian tradition, but it would be highly precarious to suggest that such myths were known to the circles of Palestinian Christians among whom the tradition is first found. Possibly at a later date some influence on details of the story as told, *e.g.* in *Nicodemus*, might be seen —the glorious light shining in Hades, the cessation of groaning, despair, and tears, resemble incidents in these myths. But may they not much more likely be the natural product of an attempt to amplify imaginatively the current doctrine? The episode of the light is directly referred to the prophecy, 'the

[1] Pfleiderer, *op. cit.* p. 100; Cheyne, *Bible Problems*, p. 104.
[2] Brandt, *Mandäische Schriften*, p. 190; cf. *Mand. Religion*, pp. 34, 72.

people that sat in darkness have seen a great light,' and it was natural that spiritual enlightenment in Hades should be rendered in terms of physical light, and that the dark Hades visited by Him who is the Light of the world should shine with light. The other episode would as easily suggest itself in a story of release from a region of darkness and pain. Both are inevitable in a narrative describing the visit of the Lord of life and light, the Sun of Righteousness, to a region believed to be one of gloom and suffering.[1]

As to the more general argument for Eastern influences on the episode of the rescue, we do not always know the date of Hindu and Buddhist documents from which, *ex hypothesi*, they flowed, nor do we know that such works were known in Christian circles. It is really unnecessary to look so far afield for what can be explained naturally and simply. The mythical idea of the rescue of the dead by a Redeemer is one which was almost bound to arise quite independently wherever an ethical religion combined the ideas of punishment after death for sin and of salvation through a Divine or semi-Divine being. That it did so in Christianity cannot reasonably be doubted.

It was the more easy to do so since existing Jewish beliefs might have afforded a *point d'appui* for the whole conception. There was first of all the belief found in Isa. xxvi. 19 that dead Israelites would be raised from Sheol to share in the Messianic Kingdom. In the *Testament of the XII Patriarchs* we note the binding of Beliar, or the breaking of the head of the dragon by the Lord at the end of the age, and the redemption of 'all the captivity of the sons of men from Beliar.' The saints will

[1] Cf. Chrysostom's words—Hades was a dark and gloomy place, 'until the Sun of Righteousness descended and lightened it, making Heaven of Hades' (*Hom. de Cœmet. et Cruce*). Cf. also S. Ambrose, *de Incar. Domini*, v. 41, who speaks of the Light of eternal life shed forth in the Underworld and the true Light of wisdom illuminating it.

then rest in Eden and the new Jerusalem on the renewed earth.[1] In another passage this binding of Beliar, as well as the opening of the gates of Paradise, the removal of the threatening sword, and the bestowal of the Tree of Life on the saints for their food, is ascribed to the Messianic priest.[2] Here there is a somewhat close parallel to incidents in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, which tell of the tree of life and the entry into Paradise. In 4 Esdras (viii. 52) occurs this passage regarding the future opening of Paradise: 'For you is opened Paradise, the tree of life is planted, the future ages are prepared'; and in the same book there are passages on the future rising of those that sleep in the earth and their deliverance from their 'chambers' (iv. 35, 41, 42, vii. 32; cf. ii. 31). Another passage from the *Testament of the XII Patriarchs* (*Benj.* xvi. 6 f.) says that 'then shall ye see Enoch, Noah, Shem, and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob rising on the right hand in gladness,' *i.e.* to the renewed earth. Again in 2 Baruch (xxx. 2): 'When the time of Messiah is fulfilled all who have fallen asleep in the hope of Him shall rise again.' The 'treasuries' will be opened in which their souls are preserved. 'There shall be spread before them the extent of Paradise' (li. 11).[3] In the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (xlii. 5) angels at the last coming will lead forth Adam with the forefathers from Hades (where they are confined, xli. 1) to Paradise without their incurring judgment, in order that 'they may rejoice as a man calls those whom he loves to feast with him.' The passages already quoted from *Bereshit Rabba* and *Yalḳuṭ Shimʿoni*, regarding the rescue of souls from Gehinnom by

[1] Zeb. ix. 8, Asher vii. 3, Dan v. 11, 12. In the last passage the 'captivity' is explained as 'the souls of the saints,' but this may be a Christian interpolation. See Charles, *Test. of XII Patriarchs*, p. 130.

[2] Levi xviii. 10 ff. Cf. 4 Esd. viii. 52, 'Paradise is opened to you.' Paradise will appear over against Gehenna after the final judgment (4 Esd. vii. 36). Cf. *Secrets of Enoch*, viii., *Apoc. of Baruch*, li. 11.

[3] See my 'Eschatology,' in *ERE* v. 379 f.

Messiah or of souls of sinners by the righteous, are of interest in this connexion. Late as they may be, the former, at least, is in line with the views found in Jewish apocalyptic literature. Wherever souls of the righteous are described as existing in an intermediate condition, previous to their final bliss, it is obvious that a time of release in the future must have been taken for granted.[1]

The Jewish contemporaries of our Lord entertained the great hope that at the end of the age, when the Messianic Kingdom was established, the Messiah would bring salvation not only to the living but to dead Israelites. Through Him Hades would give up the dead, who would rise to share in the Kingdom.[2] Christ had proved Himself to be the true Messiah: by His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension His Kingdom was founded, that Kingdom of which He had said that 'many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven' (S. Matt. viii. 11). How easy, then, to transfer these Jewish hopes regarding the dead to Him as Messiah, since His followers, as Jews, were interested in the destiny of the righteous dead and the fathers of their race. That which, according to Jewish expectation, was to happen in the future, was already accomplished.[3] The righteous dead had been raised from Sheol or

[1] To these should be added passages in the Old Testament which suggested deliverance of righteous men from Sheol—Ps. xlix. 15, xxx. 3; Hos. xiii. 14; Zech. ix. 11—as well as others in which reference is made to release of prisoners from the pit, from darkness, or from the prison-house—Isa. xlii. 7, xlix. 9; cf. li. 14, lxi. 1. While the latter did not necessarily refer to spirits in Hades, it was easy to give them such an interpretation, as was done by the Fathers. On the other hand it must be remembered that some late Jewish apocalyptic writings (*Apocalypse of Moses* and sections of the *Book of Enoch*) taught that righteous Israelites were not in Hades, but in an intermediate Paradise.

[2] Enoch lxv. 10; 4 Esd. viii. 53; Bar. xxi. 23; cf. Rev. xx. 13.

[3] The end of the age was still in the future, when Death would be fully overthrown (1 Cor. xv. 26; Rev. xx. 14).

Hades, and were already partakers of the bliss of the Kingdom (cf. 2 Tim. i. 10).

In this connexion Gschwind maintains that the passage in S. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53 about the rising of the saints is a proof of this. The author of this Gospel was interested in proving that our Lord was the Messiah. He wrote specially for Jewish readers, who held that the righteous dead would be raised to share in the Messianic Kingdom. They would therefore recognize in this account of a Resurrection of the saints of the Old Covenant 'an unequalled proof of the beginning of the Messianic era,'[1] which opened with the death of Christ on the Cross. The earthquake, the rending of the rocks, the opening of the graves, the rising of them that slept, were so many signs which a Jew might recognize as heralding the opening of the Messianic time.[2] As we shall presently see, this Matthæan passage had far-reaching effects on the doctrine of the Descent.

In any case the belief in a release of the dead from Hades was current in Jewish thought, and we need go no further than Jewish-Christian circles to find the origin of the doctrine of the Descent. It required no formative influences from Pagan sources. We may also say with truth that the idea of souls being saved from the darkness or pains of the Underworld, found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, no less than the idea of bringing back the dead from Hades, is a natural deduction from man's thoughts of mercy or his revolt at the triumph of Death.[3] The place of this idea in the Christian scheme need not be ascribed to foreign sources.

Those Christians who entertained Chiliastic hopes of Christ's Kingdom on earth, to which dead saints would rise in order to

[1] Gschwind, p. 188; cf. also the whole section of his book, pp. 179 ff.

[2] Cf. the eschatological passage in the *Test. of Levi*, iv. (p. 139), about the rending of the rocks, etc., with the Christian interpolation.

[3] Cf. the idea of the transference of souls from torment to bliss in Christian belief, outside the Descent tradition, p. 32, *supra*.

participate in it, were in direct line with Jewish eschatological hopes. But unlike those Christians who believed that the dead had already been raised to share in the kingdom of Heaven, they held, with Jewish eschatology, that the dead had not yet been removed from Hades. That would take place when the millennial Kingdom began. Meanwhile the good news had been brought to them in Hades by Christ Himself.[1]

[1] The passage in Rev. xx. 13, 'Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them,' is sometimes spoken of as a 'harrowing of Hades,' *e.g.* by Swete, *Apoc. of S. John*, 1906, *in loc.* But it is hardly a 'harrowing of Hades' in the sense in which the phrase is generally used. The dead are given up for judgment.

CHAPTER XVII

THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAINTS

The curious incident in S. Matt. xxvii. 51–53 is elaborated mainly in Apocryphal documents, and the question arises how far it is connected with the doctrine of the Descent. When the earthquake occurs at our Lord's death, 'the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep arose (*πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ἠγέρθη*), and coming forth out of the tombs after His resurrection, they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many.'

The earthquake takes place at the moment of Christ's death and opens the tombs, but the dead do not come forth till after His resurrection. It can hardly be intended that the dead remained restored to life in their graves till Christ rose. Rather are there two points of time—(1) the opening of the graves at the Crucifixion, (2) the resurrection after Christ has risen. Pfleiderer, who thinks that we are meant to suppose that the dead did remain alive in their graves, says with truth that it would have offended 'the reverent sense of what was fitting that the saints should have left their graves before Christ.'[1]

The addition to the text of S. Mark xvi. 3 in the Latin fragment of Codex Bobiensis is a probable reflexion of this passage. It runs: 'Suddenly at the third hour there was darkness through the whole earth, and angels descended from Heaven;

[1] O. Pfleiderer, *Primitive Christianity*, London, 1909, ii. 370.

and they rise in the brightness of the living God (*or*, the living ones of God rise in brightness), and ascended with Him, and immediately there was light.' Those who rise and ascend with Christ (Resurrection and Ascension being here conjoined as in the *Gospel of Peter*, xiii. 46) are not the angels, but the dead—'the living ones of God.'[1]

Resch compares the passage in S. Matthew with the statement of the apologist Quadratus (*c.* 125), that those whom Christ had healed and raised from the dead during His earthly ministry had been seen and still existed, *i.e.* some had survived even to the time of Quadratus.[2] A similar historic notice or a tradition of the survival of those raised by Christ during His ministry was used by the Evangelist, who had already related some examples of such raising, but the raising is bound up by him with the Crucifixion narrative. Resch compares the words used by Quadratus, *ἀναστάντες*, *ὤφθησαν*, with those in S. Matthew, *ἠγέρθη*, *ἐφανίσθησαν*.[3] This is an interesting, but not wholly conclusive, explanation of the passage.

The Matthew incident of the raising of the dead saints is directly connected with the Descent by several writers of the early centuries. In the *Odes of Solomon* (xxii.) it is obviously referred to in the verse: 'Those who believe in Him, God's hand chose from the graves, separated them from the dead, took dead bones and clad them with bodies.' Athanasius, speaking of the Descent, refers to the rising of the saints and their appearing to their own people. It is also mentioned by S. Clement of Alexandria, Hilary, Origen, Aphraates, Prudentius, Ambrose, Jerome, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Ephrem Syrus, and may be referred to by Hippolytus in calling Christ 'the Re-

[1] See A. Resch, *Aussercanon. Paralleltexte*, in *TU* x. 2. 369 f., and Gschwind, p. 193.

[2] Quadratus, in Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* iv. 3. 2.

[3] Resch, *op. cit.* x. 2. 363.

surrection of the buried ' in connexion with the Descent.[1] These writers connect this rising of the saints with Christ's Resurrection. Ephrem, in one of his Hymns, speaks of Christ's Voice sounding through Sheol, and how He burst the graves one by one, as if these were in or connected with Hades.[2]

Ambrose, describing how Christ bore away the captives from Hades and led them to Heaven, adds that ' many of them, rising in their bodies, appeared to many as a testimony that Death was conquered.' His meaning seems to be that some of those rescued from Hades rose also in their bodies. Cyril of Jerusalem, who speaks of Christ ascending from Hades with a great company, says that ' many bodies of the saints which slept arose through Him,' possibly sharing the view of Ambrose who, in another passage, speaks of Christ's ascending to Heaven with the *souls* snatched away.[3]

Other writers do not speak of the risen dead appearing in the earthly, but in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is found in Clement of Alexandria who, citing S. Matt. xxvii. 52 f., says that the words mean that those raised had been transferred to a better place. Origen connects the words, ' entered into the Holy City,' with the prophetic announcement of the rescue of souls in Ps. lxviii. 18 : ' Ascending up on high, He led captivity captive.' The Holy City is the heavenly Jerusalem.[4] In this interpretation of the Holy City, Origen is followed by Jerome,

[1] See these in Chapter VII. The reference to ' dead bones ' in Ode xxii. goes back to Ezek. xxxviii. 7 f. For possible earlier references, see p. 298, *infra*.

[2] Ephrem, *Nisibene Hymns*, 36, see p. 112, *supra*. In the Homily of Eusebius, ' On the Devil and Hades,' there is a similar connexion of the grave and Hades in the account of the raising of Lazarus. Hades says that he caused the body to become corrupt, having it in guard. His members began to dissolve. Then Christ came to the gates of Hades and called, ' Lazarus, come forth.' And Lazarus, though corrupt, marched forth from ' my belly.' See p. 177, *supra*, and Additional Notes, p. 333.

[3] Ambrose, *in Ep. ad Ephes.* c. 4, *in Ep. ad Rom.* c. 10 ; Cyril of Jerus. *Catech. Lectures*, iv. 11. See pp. 121, 127, *supra*.

[4] Clement, *Strom.* vi. 6 ; Origen, *in Rom.* v. 1.

Eusebius, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, and Rufinus, who says: 'that city doubtless of which the apostle says (Gal. iv. 26), Jerusalem which is above, is free.' [1]

Was this the original meaning of the 'Holy City' in the Matthæan passage? Not improbably it was, if the passage was intended to show that the Messianic Kingdom had begun, and that, in accordance with Jewish belief, the dead had risen to share it. The words 'Holy City' would thus be used in an eschatological sense—the heavenly Jerusalem which was to be revealed at the end of the age, and of which New Testament writers also speak (Rev. iii. 12, xxi. 2, xxii. 14; Gal. iv. 26), and which was found as part of the scenery of Christian visions of Paradise.[2]

In the apocryphal writings the incident of the rising of the saints is either (1) connected with Christ's Resurrection, or (2) separated from it.

(1) In the *Gospel of Nicodemus* Joseph of Arimathea tells how Christ did not rise alone, but raised up many other dead from their tombs, who had been seen by many in Jerusalem. Two of these are the sons of Simeon. They died recently, but now their tombs are empty and they are dwelling in Arimathea, speaking to none but dwelling together in prayer. This is based on S. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53 (cf. Mt. *ἐνεφανίσθησαν πολλοίς* and Nicod. *ἐνεφανίσθησαν . . . πρὸς πολλούς*). These sons of Simeon (Leucius and Karinus), having been brought to Jerusalem, write an account of the Descent which they witnessed, sharing in the rescue from Hades. They relate that Michael, the archangel, sent them to proclaim the Resurrection of Christ, but first to go to Jordan to be baptized. They go there

[1] For Eusebius and Jerome, see pp. 110, 125, *supra*. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xl. *in 1 Cor. xv.*; Rufinus, *Expos. Symb.* c. 29; Epiph. *Hær.* xlvi. 5, lxxv. 7.

[2] *e.g.* in the vision of the African martyr Saturus, in *Barlaam and Josaphat*, in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, etc.

and are baptized with others who had risen. Then they go to Jerusalem and accomplish the Passover of the Resurrection, but now they are to depart. Then they vanish suddenly.

The Latin A narrative amplifies this latter section, and its order is confused. The two are bidden to go to Jerusalem with their brethren, crying out and glorifying the Resurrection. They are also charged to go over Jordan to a place rich and fertile where are many who rose with them for a testimony of the Resurrection. For three days they keep the Passover in Jerusalem. They are baptized in Jordan and receive white robes 'every one of us.' After the three days they who had risen with them are caught up in the clouds and taken over Jordan, and are seen no more. Leucius and Karinus are told to remain in Arimathea. After writing the narrative they are transfigured and are seen no more.[1] The command to go over Jordan perhaps relates to this vanishing, for the others baptized are taken over Jordan. The 'rich and fertile place' there may be the earthly Paradise.

Neither the Greek nor Latin A versions make clear whether all rescued from Hades and taken to Paradise are sent thence to resume their bodies, or whether some, as spirits, enter Paradise, while others resume their bodies for a time and then vanish. The Latin B version is more precise. The Rabbis, coming from Galilee to Jordan, meet a multitude in white garments, among them Leucius and Karinus. They tell how they rose with Christ *ab inferis*, and He revived them from the dead. Thus the gates of death and darkness are destroyed, and the souls of the saints are taken thence and ascended into Heaven with Christ. But 'to us the Lord commanded to walk the banks of Jordan and the mountains.' The Rabbis tell this to the council in Jerusalem. Search is made, and the graves of the two men are found empty. Nicodemus, Joseph,

[1] *Nicod.* Gk. and Lat. A, cc. 1, 11.

and three Rabbis are then sent to seek them. On Mount Amalech there appear suddenly to them about twelve thousand, who had risen with the Lord, singing about His Resurrection. An angel then bids them go to seek Leucius and Karinus in their own house. This they do, and the two then write the narrative of the Descent. This ends with the account of all in Hades going thence with the Lord, 'but it was commanded to us and many others, that we should rise in the body, giving testimony in the world of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the things done *apud inferos*.' [1]

Thus some (souls) ascend with Christ: others rise in their bodies and appear for a time on earth. Nothing is here said of their baptism in Jordan. This form of the narrative agrees with the statement of S. Ambrose that Hades' captives were led to Heaven (souls), but some rose in their bodies.

In the *Anaphora of Pilate* the Greek recension B tells how, at the Resurrection, majestic men were seen and called to those in Hades to come forth. Then the dead arose, namely, the Old Testament saints. Recension A and the Syriac version speak of the dead (the saints) being seen during the earthquake at the Crucifixion. Then follows the announcement of the majestic men to those in Hades. The dead are raised and appear in the body.[2] This twofold rising is probably due to a misunderstanding of S. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53—the graves opening at the earthquake being assumed to mean a rising of the dead then, and a second resurrection following our Lord's, as in ver. 53.

The narrative of the Descent in the Homily of Pseudo-Epiphanius ends with the following: 'The Lord arose with him—Adam who is conjoined with Him, and with them Eve, and many other bodies which slept in faith from of old arose, proclaiming the Resurrection of the Lord on the third day.' [3]

[1] *Nicod.* Latin B, cc. 1, 10.
[2] See pp. 142 ff., *supra*.
[3] See p. 196, *supra*.

(2) In the Syriac *History of John* the dead come forth at the time of the earthquake, not at the Resurrection, and worship Christ as He hangs on the Cross. Many of them are still alive. So in the *Story of Peter and Paul*, S. Peter gives a summary of Christ's life and crucifixion. He descended into Hell. Death was terrified and hid. The dead rose from the graves and returned the greetings of the people. Christ rose on the third day.[1] Both these documents connect the rising of the dead with the moment of Christ's death and appearance in Hades, thus misreading the Matthæan passage.

In the *Questions of S. Bartholomew* Christ descends to Hades ; Bartholomew sees how He has vanished from the Cross during the darkness. Then he sees Him again on the Cross, after He has brought the patriarchs from Hades, and he witnesses the dead arising, worshipping Him, and going again into their sepulchres.[2]

The passage in S. Matthew's Gospel suggests that those who rose from the graves were the Old Testament saints rescued from Hades. The rescue must be connected with Christ's appearance in Hades : the rising occurs after His Resurrection. This is more or less the sequence in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, in Pseudo-Epiphanius, and in other writings. We are not told by S. Matthew that those who rose went thereafter bodily to Paradise, but was there an early version of the Descent narrative which took this form ? This is, in effect, found in the *Ascension of Isaiah* : the righteous dead are already in the seventh Heaven with ' their garments of the upper world,' *i.e.* resurrection bodies. Meanwhile, those others, rescued from Hades, who will ascend with Christ to Heaven, are to receive their heavenly garments there.[3] This is based on 2 Cor. v. 1 f. : ' We have a building

[1] See pp. 144–45, *supra.*
[2] See p. 146, *supra.*
[3] See p. 136, *supra.*

of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,' *i.e.* heavenly bodies with which discarnate spirits will be clothed on reaching Heaven. The only difference between the *Ascension of Isaiah* on the one hand and *Nicodemus* and the hypothetical early version on the other, is that in the one the rescued souls do not appear risen on earth ; in the other they do. It is the difference between the two aspects of the resurrection as set forth by S. Paul : one, a rising from the grave at the Last Day (1 Cor. xv. ; 1 Thess. iv. 16 f.) ; the other, a clothing of the spirit with a spiritual body at death in the Other World (2 Cor. v. 1 ff.).

Thus while generally the Descent and rescue of souls in Hades meant no more than that discarnate spirits had been taken to Paradise, this tradition showed that they had also been raised bodily from death. This gained some support from theologians, but many of these treat it allegorically. But it is enshrined in S. Matthew's Gospel, though it is not easy to see how such a mythical rendering of the Descent, such a crude misunderstanding of its real meaning, could have been thus honoured. From the obvious references to this passage in apocryphal documents, there were two traditions regarding this resurrection of the saints : one connecting it with our Lord's Death, the other with His Resurrection. Did these various traditions exist before the passage was inserted in the Gospel ? If so, they seem to have been combined in an awkward fashion.[1]

S. Augustine is perplexed by the beliefs founded on S. Matt. xxvii. 52, that to the righteous was granted such a

[1] A resurrection at the moment of Christ's death would be shown by omitting ' after His Resurrection '—' Many bodies of saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves, and went into the Holy City.' A resurrection after Christ's rising would be shown by omitting ' and came out of the graves,' and by placing a period after ' opened '—' Many bodies of saints which slept arose after His Resurrection, and went into the Holy City.'

Resurrection as is promised to us at the end of the world. If those who rose did not die again, it would be necessary to inquire how Christ can be regarded as 'first-begotten from the dead.' If it be said that the statement is made by anticipation, *i.e.* the graves were opened at the earthquake, but the saints did not rise then, but after Christ had risen, yet there still remains a difficulty. For S. Peter in citing Ps. xvi. and referring 'His flesh should not see corruption' to Christ, adds concerning David, 'He is buried and his sepulchre is with us to this day.' This statement could have had no force as an argument unless the body of David was still in the sepulchre. It is hard that David should not be included in this resurrection of the saints. Further, Heb. xi. 40, 'God having . . . perfect,' would be endangered if these souls are already established in the incorruptible Resurrection-state which is promised to us when we are to be made perfect at the end of the world. S. Augustine then leaves this question.[1] But later he adds, alluding to the current belief that the Underworld was emptied, that, if so, it is not to be believed that all rose in the flesh, or that those who rose did so to be judged according to men in the flesh (1 S. Pet. iv. 6).[2]

It is interesting to observe that a passage in the *Testament of the XII Patriarchs* connects an earthquake with a spoiling of Hades, if the latter be thus interpreted as a Christian interpolation. Nothing is said, however, of an appearance of the saints. 'Know that the Lord will execute judgment upon the sons of men, because when the rocks are being rent, and the sun quenched, and the waters dried up, and the fires cowering, and all creation troubled, and the invisible spirits melting away, and Hades spoiled through the suffering (πάθει) of the Most High, men will be unbelieving.'[3] If the words τοῦ ᾅδου

[1] *Ep.* clxiv. 9. [2] *Ibid.* 11.
[3] *Test. XII Patr., Levi* iv. 1.

σκυλευομένου are taken in a passive sense, then they are a Christian interpolation by one who thought of the rending of the rocks at the Crucifixion in S. Matt. xxvii. 51, instead of at the Judgment as is intended by the rest of the passage. This points to the Matthæan passage as representing one tradition of the Descent, perhaps remotely connected with or suggested by Dan. xii. 2, 'Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,'[1] and with Jewish tradition that at the coming of Messiah Adam, the patriarchs, etc., would rise.

That the Matthew passage represents a Descent tradition—'an incomplete and coarse reminiscence of the Descent story'[2]—is suggested by another parallel. Those who rise are 'the saints which slept' (τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων), and this phrase is one which occurs in early references to the Descent. Thus in the *Gospel of Peter*, 'Hast Thou preached to them that slept?' (τοῖς κοιμωμένοις); in the apocryphon quoted by Justin and Irenæus, 'the Lord remembered His dead ones who slept in the earth of sepulchre' (τῶν κεκοιμημένων);[3] in the Latin interpolation in *Sirach* xxiv. 32, 'I . . . will visit all that sleep (*omnes dormientes*); in *Hermas* the apostles κοιμηθέντες ἐν δυνάμει καὶ πίστει, preach τοῖς προκεκοιμημένοις.'[4] The use of the word κοιμάω in all these passages referring to the dead and the Descent points to the likelihood of the Matthæan passage being a tradition of the Descent, since the same word is used there also.

Both Resch and Gschwind are of the opinion that the passage cited by Justin and Irenæus came from an apocryphal Book of Jeremiah, and that it influenced the passage in the

[1] Cf. C. Bigg, *Inter. Crit. Commentary, Peter and Jude*, p. 163.

[2] F. Loofs, 'Christ's Descent into Hell,' *TCHR* ii. 299, and *ERE* iv. 660.

[3] Irenæus (v. 31. 1) has 'mortuorum.'

[4] Cf. the use of the same word in the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, as cited by Jerome, *de Viris Illustr.* 2, 'The Son of Man is risen from among them that slept.'

Gospel.[1] But this is unlikely, and would suppose a much too early origin for this apocryphal book.

The Matthew passage was certainly interpreted as referring to the Descent by many of the Fathers, as well as in apocryphal writings. The first who distinctly refers to it in this sense is Irenæus in his note on 2 Kings vi. 6, where the iron floating through the wood was an indication of the many souls who ascended and were seen in their bodies with the Descent of the holy soul of Christ.[2]

The passage in S. Ignatius regarding the prophets who expected Christ, and Who, being come (*i.e.* into Hades), 'raised them from the dead' (*ἤγειρεν αὐτοὺς ἐκ νεκρῶν*), doubtless means a resurrection rather than a spiritual raising.[3] So, too, does the passage about the Descent in the preaching of Thaddeus: *καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὸν Ἅιδην . . . καὶ ἀνήγειρεν νεκρούς* (var. lect., *ἀνέστη καὶ συνήγειρεν τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς ἀπ' αἰώνιον κεκοιμημένους*), with the succeeding words: 'He descended alone, but ascended with a great multitude to the Father.'[4] Both passages seem to be based on the account of the raising of the dead saints (*ἠγέρθη*) in S. Matt. xxvii. This is confirmed by the words of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (c. 1): *ὅτι οὐκ ἠγέρθη μόνος, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ πολλοὺς νεκροὺς ἤγειρεν.* These appeared in Jerusalem.

Loofs thinks that this explanation of 'raised them from the dead' in Ignatius is negatived by the fact that in his *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (v. 2) the prophets and others are 'numbered in the Gospel of our common hope,' *i.e.* look forward to

[1] A. Resch, *op. cit.* p. 369 ff.; Gschwind, p. 220.

[2] Iren., fragments, in Oxford *Library of the Fathers*, p. 551.

[3] Ignat. *ad Magnes.* c. 9.

[4] Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* i. 13. 20 (*Die griech. christl. Schriftsteller*, Leipzig, 1902–11, ii. 1. 96). The same combination is found in S. Cyril of Jerusalem: 'Our Lord descended into Hades alone, but ascended with a great company. He went down to death, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose through Him' (p. 127, *supra*).

the Resurrection as all Christians do. But Ignatius often speaks of Christ as 'our hope,' and the passage may merely mean that they shared the common salvation.[1]

The Matthæan passage may also have influenced S. Cyprian's translation of ζῶσιν in 1 S. Pet. iv. 6 by *suscitentur*, and the words of a Hymn in the Syriac *Acts of Thomas*: 'Who became in Sheol peace and hope to the dead, who came to life and were raised.'[2]

As to this tradition of a Resurrection of Saints in connexion with the Descent, while it has no Pagan parallels, its origin is sufficiently explained by the belief that the entrance to Paradise and Resurrection must be simultaneous, by the fact that Christ, even before His death, raised men from death, that He is Himself to be the Raiser of the dead (S. John v. 21, 29, vi. 40, xi. 25; Rev. i. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 21 f.), and by the desire to glorify His Resurrection and to make it the first-fruits of a harvest visibly gathered then and to be made complete hereafter.

[1] Loofs, *ERE* iv. 661. In *loc. cit.* p. 297 he takes the view that the Ignatian passage, at least, means no more than an imparting to the saints of Christ's eternal life, or possibly that they had received provisional bodies (cf. *ERE* iv. 661). The *Nicodemus* passage about Christ taking Adam by the hand and raising him (ἤγειρε), followed by His words to the others, 'I do raise (ἀνίστω) you all up,' probably means only a removal from Hades. T. Zahn, *Ignat. von Antioch*, Gotha, 1873, p. 598, connects the Ignatian passage with S. Matt. xxvii.

[2] See pp. 95, 141, *supra*.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GNOSTIC VERSION OF THE DESCENT

Pfleiderer, discussing the origin of the Descent doctrine in his *Early Christian Conception of Christ*, writes thus of the Gnostic scheme of salvation: 'The heavenly Christ-Spirit descends through all space [to earth] to deliver the souls imprisoned by the Satanic powers of earth and of Hades. . . . From the circles of syncretistic Gnosticism, this myth of the Descent passed also into Catholic Christianity,' having reached Gnosticism from Pagan sources by way of the Mandæan myth of Hibil Ziwa.[1] We have seen that this myth offers no real parallel to the Christian Descent story. It remains to discuss how far Pfleiderer's statement regarding the relation of the Gnostic Descent doctrine to the Catholic doctrine is accurate.

In Gnostic terminology, Hades generally means, not the Underworld, but this world; for this earthly scene is the nether region where the Cosmocrator (the devil in the Valentinian system) or spirit of evil dwells.[2] Thus, in the Gnostic *Acts of John*, man's true nature is said to have been sunk in lawlessness, vanquished by Satan, and mingled in the things of Hades, *i.e.* this material world, evil because material.[3] To rescue man, to enlighten his soul and raise it from the things of Hades, Christ

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 101.

[2] Cf. Irenæus, i. 5. 4, i. 30. 8. This world is also figuratively called Egypt, or Capernaum, *ibid.* v. 31. 2.

[3] *Acts of John*, c. 112. Cf. Lipsius, *Die Apokr. Apostelgesch.* i. 538.

descended either to unite with the human Jesus or to appear in a docetic humanity. Either way, He would conquer the world-rulers, the Archons of the spheres, or the Cosmocrator. Thus the Descent of the Divine Æon Christ through the spheres to this world is the Gnostic parallel to the orthodox doctrine of the Descent to Hades. Marcion, it is true, adopts the orthodox view in his system, but in this he stands alone among Gnostic teachers.

How, then, was this Descent accomplished according to the Gnostics ?

The rulers of the spheres are hostile, hence in descending Christ passes through them invisibly, or He takes the forms of the rulers, either to escape their notice, as the Simonians, the Carpocratians, the Basilideans described by Irenæus and the writer of *Pistis Sophia* taught,[1] and so to appear on earth as a man while not really a man,[2] or else for the purpose of emptying the Archons of their power or of the spiritual seed which they possessed (the Ophite doctrine).[3] Hence, because Christ assumes the forms of the Archons, He is called in the *Acts of Thomas* πολύμορφος, 'of many forms.'[4] Similarly, according to the Sethians, the Logos of light took the form of the beast, the serpent, in order by means of this deceptive form to set free souls imprisoned in matter.[5] This is admirably illustrated from the beautiful Hymn of the Naassenes preserved by Hippolytus. The trials of the soul, wandering through the maze of ills, imprisoned in matter, are first described. Jesus has pity on man, and announces His intention of descending to enlighten him :

[1] Iren. *adv. Hær.* i. 23. 3, i. 25. 1, i. 24. 4, 5 ; *Pistis Sophia*, c. 7.

[2] Cf. *Acts of Thomas*, c. 45 : 'We knew Him not ; He deceived us by His homely form . . . for we thought Him to be a man clothed with flesh' (ἀνὴρ σαρκόφορος).

[3] Iren. i. 30. 12.

[4] *Acts of Thomas*, c. 48.

[5] Hippolytus, *Refut.* v. 14.

'On this account, Father, send me;
Let me descend with seals in my hands;
Let me sweep through the Æons;
Let me disclose all secrets;
Let me reveal the forms of all gods;
And the hidden mystery of the Way
Called Gnosis, let me impart.'[1]

The Descent of the Saviour is accomplished by means of seals or talismans, and His object is to enlighten men with the Gnosis and its esoteric mysteries, so that they may obtain victory over the gods, the Archons.

Another example is perhaps to be found in the famous 'Hymn of the Pearl,' contained in the Syriac version of the *Acts of Thomas*. The Hymn, sung by the apostle, tells how the king's son (the narrator) dwelt in his father's house in the East. Thence he was sent with many treasures, but first his glittering robe and purple toga were taken off him. A compact was made with him that if he went down to Egypt and brought back the pearl 'in the midst of the sea, girdled by the loud-breathing serpent,' he would again put on these robes and be heir with his brother. He went with two guardians by a difficult way, reaching Babel and Sarbug, and so to Egypt, where his guides left him. There he saw one of his race, a graceful youth, and warned him against the Egyptians. Meanwhile he put on Egyptian garments, lest they should deem him a stranger come to recover the pearl and should set the serpent against him. Yet they found him out, and dealt craftily with him. He ate their food, and now he forgot that he was a king's son, forgot the pearl, and, because of the food, fell into a deep sleep. Of these things his parents were aware, and a letter was sent him reminding him of his lineage and his purpose, the pearl and the glorious robe. The letter flew to him like an eagle, and 'became all speech.' At its voice he awakened: he read it, and re-

[1] Hippolytus, *Refut.* v. 10.

membrance came to him. He charmed the serpent with charms, lulling it to sleep by naming his father's name and the names of his mother and of 'our second in power.' Now he snatched the pearl and turned to bear it back to his father's house. He put off his filthy garment and left it in Egypt, and departed for home, the letter guiding him with the light that came from it. The royal robe also shone before him, and by its voice encouraged him, and with love led him on. So, passing Sarbug and Babel, he came to Maishan, and there received his bright garments sent thither by his parents. He had forgotten how bright they were, for he had been very young when he left his father's house. But now the garment seemed to become a mirror or a double of himself: 'We were two in distinction, yet one in likeness.' It spoke: 'I am the active in deeds whom they reared for him before the father, and I perceived myself, that my stature grew according to his labours.' Then he ran and put on the robe, and went up to the gate of the city and worshipped the brightness of the father, who received him, and 'promised me that with him I should be sent to the king.'[1]

In this Hymn, generally ascribed to the Syrian Bardaisan, there are some interesting features. Egypt is the dark world; the serpent a type of the Cosmocrator or Demiurge or evil world-principle; the pearl is the human soul (or the Gnosis ?). The parents of the prince are the divinities of the Gnostic Pleroma—the king the Supreme God, the queen perhaps the Holy Spirit regarded as feminine. By eating the food of Egypt the prince becomes partaker of its character and forgets his true home. This corresponds to the danger of eating the strange food of gods, ghosts, or spirits.[2] The letter which goes of itself, speaks,

[1] Wright, *Apoc. Acts*, ii. 238 f.; James, *op. cit.* p. 411 f.; E. Hennecke, *Neutest. Apokryphen*, Tübingen, 1924, p. 277 f.

[2] See p. 42, *supra*.

and gives light, reminds one of magic missives described in various regions, *e.g.* the Norse 'sending.'[1] Lulling the serpent by the names of deities illustrates the power of the name. The garments which are the reward are a double of the prince, and thus correspond to the guardian angel or the Persian *fravashi* in some aspects. But they are apparently also to be connected with the 'garments of the upper world' in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and as such represent the spiritual body of 2 Cor. v. 1 f., though this is hardly a Gnostic conception.

Various interpretations of this Hymn have been suggested. Some regard it as a Gnostic allegory of the human soul coming from Heaven to the dark Earth-world, clad there in a material body, and only with difficulty recalled to its true sphere. While this is an attractive interpretation, and if the pearl is the Gnosis, why should that be in the power of the serpent? Another interpretation regards the king's son as Christ, the heavenly Æon, who descends to earth to rescue the soul (the pearl) from the lordship of the Cosmocrator, the serpent. The meeting with a kinsman in Egypt might represent the union of the heavenly Æon with the human Jesus. But the eating of the food of Egypt and the consequent forgetting of His mission cannot easily be ascribed to the heavenly Christ.[2] Is there here an obscure reference to the first temptation, to make stones into bread?[3] The putting on the garments of Egypt so as to deceive its people is the equivalent of the heavenly Christ's assuming

[1] See my article, 'Lycanthropy,' in *ERE* viii. 218 f.

[2] It has been said that this represents an incident in an Egyptian myth on which the Hymn is supposed to be based, *i.e.* the Descent of a soul, that of Horus, to the world of the dead, where Isis gave him his heart, the equivalent of giving him his memory, and set him free from the Underworld. The connexion seems doubtful. See Reitzenstein, 'Zwei hellenistische Hymnen,' *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, viii. 167 f.

[3] So E. Preuschen, in E. Hennecke, *Handbuch zu den Neutest. Apokryphen*, Tübingen, 1904, p. 589.

the forms of the Archons, or deceiving the World-rulers by putting on an earthly body.[1]

The passages in the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Epistle of the Apostles* on the Descent of Christ through the heavens, and the question of their relation to Gnostic conceptions, have already been considered.[2]

The passage on the Descent already cited from the *Acts of Thomas*, c. 10, occurring as it does at the end of a distinctly Gnostic section, might be equally interpreted in a Gnostic and in an orthodox sense.[3] Read casually, it seems to refer to the Descent to Hades as held in orthodox circles. Read more carefully, it is easy to see how it may intend a Descent of Christ unseen through the spheres, though heard as a Voice by their rulers : a coming from the height to Hades, *i.e.* this world, where Christ opens doors of enlightenment to those shut up in the treasury of darkness (the bondage of matter). Those thus shut up (souls) are shown the way that leads up into the height (' the way called Gnosis ' of the Naassene Hymn). The *Acts of Thomas*, Gnostic as they were, circulated almost unchanged in Catholic communities, and this passage in particular shows how easily Gnostic ideas might pass unsuspected among those ignorant of the meaning of Gnostic mythology. So the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Epistle of the Apostles* suggest that there was a wide borderland in which Gnostic and orthodox views mingled and found ready acceptance.

The following are characteristic of the Gnostic Descent myth—Descent through various regions, the rulers and persons of which are hostile ; the use of seals or talismans and the giving of passwords ; the practice of shape-shifting or invisibility

[1] E. Preuschen, *Zwei Gnostische Hymnen*, Giessen, 1904 ; W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, p. 252 f. ; A. A. Bevan, ' The Hymn of the Soul,' *TS* vol. v.

[2] See Chapter XII.

[3] See p. 140, *supra*.

to outwit the hostile beings and to rob them of their powers. Only the last of these, and that in a modified form, is found in the Catholic version of the Descent story. Common to both is the purpose of the Descent, though differently conceived—enlightenment and rescue of souls sunk in matter and in the power of the Cosmocrator in this world (Gnostic); the preaching to and rescue of souls of the dead, ignorant of the Gospel, imprisoned in Hades (Catholic). When we take these two sets of characteristics, we find that the first set resembles the Descent myths of Hibil Ziwa and Manda d'Haje, which have Pagan mythical affinities. Here also are similar traits—Descent through dark and hostile (but underground) worlds, invisibility, the use of talismans, the despoiling of hostile powers of the secrets of their strength. The use of talismans and magic passwords occurs also in the lore of the soul's journey after death through unknown regions, through gates and doors, and against hostile powers, in Egyptian, Orphic, and Mithraic eschatologies. The purpose of the Descent in the Mandæan myths, namely, to discover the secrets of hostile powers and to deprive them of these, is in the Gnostic doctrine part of the method employed for the ultimate purpose of the Descent. On the other hand, the second set of characteristics is not found in Mandæan nor indeed in any Pagan myth. Thus in the Gnostic Descent doctrine one set of characteristics has Pagan affinities, generally of a more or less magical kind, while the other set has orthodox Christian affinities. Knowing what we do of the eclectic character of Gnosticism, its habit of borrowing from all sources, its use of magic, we can hardly escape the conclusion that, as far as the Descent is concerned, it has borrowed with both hands, from Paganism directly or indirectly, and from Christianity. The Gnostic 'combined his information.' The Catholic doctrine can be proved to be primitive, going back to Ignatius and to the presbyters who

were followers of the apostles, and to be based on Scriptural foundations, at the least. Thus it is more reasonable to hold that Gnosticism took what it needed from Christianity for its peculiar Descent doctrine, than that Christianity borrowed from Gnosticism, discarding at the same time with great ingenuity precisely those characteristics which were Pagan and transforming the Gnostic Descent into a Descent to Hades.

Even the overpowering or conquest of the powers or personages of the lower world, which enters into the Mandæan, Gnostic, and Christian Descent stories, is conceived in a different manner in the latter from that found in the two former. This is the more remarkable, since it forms one of the most popular and mythical aspects of the Christian Descent story, but the reason is found in the Scriptural sources from which it is derived and then dramatized. Thus Bousset's contention that Christ's Descent to Hades and His strife with the demons of the Underworld comprises a myth which had originally nothing to do with the Person of Christ, and was not formed on Christian ground, is not correct.[1] In spite of its spirituality, Christianity could form myths of its own, and did not necessarily take them over from outside sources.

We conclude that the Gnostic version originates from the Catholic, but that it has affinities with Pagan myths. Gnosticism took this Catholic conception of Christ's enlightening souls in Hades and rescuing them, because it fitted in with the Gnostic doctrine of enlightenment in this world. It is thus a witness to the early existence of a belief in a Preaching in Hades. It made it agree with its own cosmogony, and transformed it into a Descent from the Pleroma to the dark, material earth-world. It also made use of the Pagan conceptions already spoken of. Possibly the Christian doctrine of the Descent formed the first and most significant meeting-ground between

[1] W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*[2], p. 31.

existing Gnosticism, as yet unmingled with Christian conceptions, and primitive Christianity. To it the remaining Christian aspects of Gnosticism, as these were taken over, were made to adapt themselves. Further, in the more elaborate post-Christian Gnostic systems the idea of a Descent to earth to enlighten souls was reflected back upon the higher spheres, and produced the idea of a pre-mundane Descent of the Divine Æon out of the Pleroma to rescue the fallen Sophia from the lower spheres, as in the Valentinian system.

This transformation of the Catholic Descent doctrine by Gnosticism, interesting and ingenious as it is, shows a real poverty of conception. The Gnostic did not trouble about the fate of those who existed before Christianity, and was thus less humane than the Catholic, who, at all events, believed in the salvation of the righteous dead of the Old Covenant, or, still better, as did Clement and others, of the heathen also. True, there were exceptions to this. One is the teaching of the Valentinian Gnostic, Theodotus. 'As the Saviour descended to earth He was seen by angels, who proclaimed the glad tidings (S. Luke ii. 13). He was seen by Abraham and other righteous ones in the "Rest" (ἀνάπαυσις) on the Right (ἐν τοῖς δεξιοῖς), for "he rejoiced," Christ says, "to see My day," the Parousia in the flesh. Then when He rose the Lord preached to the righteous in the Rest and removed them and translated them, and all shall live in His shadow. For the shadow of the glory of the Saviour which is with the Father is His presence there. For the shadow of light is not darkness, but enlightenment.'[1]

According to this teaching, the Old Testament righteous belong to the class called Psychicoi, Rational or Soul-beings, and after death they are in the region of the Æon world called 'the Right,' the 'Place' of the Demiurge, or the Hebdomad (=the seventh Heaven). The Pneumatikoi or Spiritual are in a still

[1] Clement, *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, c. 18.

higher place, the Ogdoad, waiting their final entrance to the Pleroma.[1] To this higher place the Saviour transferred Abraham and the others.

Another exception is found in the Gnostic book called *Pistis Sophia*, the author of which seems to be much preoccupied with the future fate of all. The date of this book is 200–250 A.D. Mary Magdalene asks Christ regarding souls of the righteous who died before His coming. He answers that none of them had yet entered into light: only when He came to the world had He opened the Door of Light and the Way which leads to Light. But as He descended to earth through the region of the Æons (the heavenly spheres) He had sent the soul of Elijah, which He found there, into the womb of Elizabeth and thus into the body of S. John Baptist. Those of other prophets He had sent into righteous bodies, that they might learn the mysteries of light and so ascend to the kingdom of light. But the sins of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been remitted by Him, and to them He had given the mysteries of light in the Æons, and set them in the Place of Iabraoth with all the Archons who repented. Then when He finally ascends, He will take their souls into light. As for the souls of the other patriarchs and righteous ones from Adam till now, as He passed through the place of the Æons, He had sent them into the bodies of those who would become righteous, so that, like the prophets, they will find the mysteries of light and inherit the kingdom of light.[2]

[1] Clement, *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, cc. 37, 63. Cf. C. Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 501 : 'The attempt of a Gnostic to make his own, according to his fancy, the Christian conception of the Descent.'

[2] See the various editions of *Pistis Sophia* by M. G. Schwartze, Berlin, pp. 12, 13, 355 f.; C. Schmidt, Leipzig, 1905, i. 229; G. R. S. Mead, London, 1896, pp. 11, 12, 355 ff. In another part of the book there is a reference to a descent of Christ and the disciples to Amente, the place of punishment. The account of this visit is lacking, but it would correspond to Pagan, Jewish, and Christian visits to the Other World already discussed. Schwartze, pp. 380–90; Mead, pp. 382–94, where Christ speaks of the torments there.

Souls were thus in a region above the earth, but lower than the kingdom of light. Embodied anew on earth, they will be fully enlightened. Here again, as in Theodotus, there is no Descent to Hades, but the Christian doctrine is used to suit Gnostic conceptions of the place of souls, Christ's enlightenment of them, and their transference then or later to a higher sphere.

In speaking of the first set of characteristics in the Gnostic Descent myth, it was said that one of these occurred in modified form in the Catholic doctrine. This is the outwitting of hostile powers, analogous to the deception of Satan as found stated in the Fathers. It might be argued that there is evidence of Pagan influence *via* Gnosticism here, nor is this absolutely to be ruled out. But we have seen that the idea might quite naturally and independently have arisen on Christian ground, and it is merely analogous to, not identical with, the Gnostic conception. The latter has affinities with Pagan ideas, but the germ of it may have come from the Christian side. This is suggested by the use made of it in the Marcionite Descent story.

The idea of a supra-mundane enlightenment occurs only in Theodotus and *Pistis Sophia* in connexion with the dead. Elsewhere the Æons are enlightened. The Æon Christ of the Valentinians strengthens the Æons by teaching them the law of 'Syzygy,' *i.e.* of the union of pairs of Æons, and enlightens them about the impossibility of attaining to knowledge of the Supreme Father, to which the Æon Sophia had tried to attain. The Æon Holy Spirit also teaches them how to praise and give thanks to the Father.[1] In a somewhat similar manner the Æons in the Basilidean system were taught and enlightened.[2] The rescue and enlightenment of the fallen Æon Sophia, already referred to, is another instance of this. What takes place in the lower world must first take place in the higher. Now it is remarkable that as S. Paul contemplates the submission to

[1] Iren. ii. 5. 6.

[2] Hippolytus, vii. 14.

Christ of all spiritual beings, those in the Heavens as well as those under the earth (Phil. ii. 10; cf. Col. i. 20), so he may have held a doctrine of Christ's enlightening the beings of the upper spheres.[1] This would be the complement of a doctrine of the Preaching to Souls in Hades, its necessary corollary. One who believed in the universal power of Christ, if he extended it to the lower world, must necessarily extend it to the spheres of the Heavens. The same connexion of ideas forced the Gnostic to postulate enlightenment of the Æons as well as, and prior to, an enlightenment of souls on earth.[2]

[1] The *τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς* might refer to the fallen angels who, in current Jewish belief, were in one of the Heavens, and to their reconciliation by Christ.

[2] Was the view entertained by many theologians and in popular belief that the soul went directly to a Heavenly Paradise after death an offset to the Gnostic idea of souls going to the Pleroma? In both Christian and Gnostic belief, the soul must undergo certain trials. See my article, 'The Ascent of the Soul,' *Irish Quarterly Review*.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ORIGIN OF THE TRADITION OF THE DESCENT

The preceding chapters have shown that, at the early stages of the doctrine of the Descent, borrowing from Pagan sources had not been resorted to, even if there were some Jewish foundation for it. Can it be traced to current eschatology, or to anything in the teaching of our Lord Himself?

The current popular Jewish doctrine of the life after death was probably represented by the parable of Dives and Lazarus. All souls passed to an intermediate state, or place of waiting, called Hades (Sheol), in which there were two divisions—one for the righteous (Abraham's Bosom), and one for the wicked.[1] This general view of the after-life is found more or less in Jewish documents. In the *Book of Enoch* (xxii.) there are three divisions in Sheol—one for the righteous, and two for the wicked. Two of these are intermediate abodes. In other sections of this book, Sheol is also an intermediate state, with a special place for the righteous. A similar view is found in 2 Macc. vi. 23, 26, xii. 42–45. In the *Apocalypse of Baruch*[2] and 4 Esdras[3] the wicked know a degree of pain in Sheol, but the righteous enjoy rest in 'treasuries' or 'chambers' there. The doctrine of the Pharisees, as reported by Josephus, was that in the Underworld there were rewards and punishments of a

[1] Cf. S. Luke xiii. 28.
[2] xxi. 23, xxiii. 5, lii. 3.
[3] iv. 35, 41.

temporary kind. Then the righteous would rise to a blissful life, the wicked would be detained in an everlasting prison.[1]

Other views existed, *e.g.* that righteous souls went to a heavenly Paradise at death; but more usually Paradise was the final abode of the righteous.

We may therefore take the parable of Dives and Lazarus as presenting a typical Jewish view of the after-life before resurrection and judgment, a view prevailing in the Palestinian schools as opposed to that which emanated from the schools of Alexandrian Judaism, namely, that at death all entered into their permanent state—Heaven or Hell. It is obvious, then, that the disciples must have believed that the soul of Christ, between His death and resurrection, was in the intermediate state, Sheol or Hades, whether in the better part of it or, more vaguely, within its bounds.[2] This was the fate of all souls. Could it be otherwise with the soul of Christ? This also the apostles would have gathered from words spoken by Christ, with reference to the analogy of Jonah's being three days and nights in the whale's belly, 'so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth' (S. Matt. xii. 40). This might mean burial, but as Sheol was regarded as subterranean, something more is intended. The living man within the huge fish typifies not merely a dead body in the grave, but a living soul in Hades, often regarded as a monster. So Jonah is said to have prayed 'out of the fish's belly,' but the words of his prayer are, 'out of the belly of Sheol cried I' (Jonah ii. 1, 2). The reference to Sheol in ver. 2 would give point to our Lord's words.

Does the same suggestion underlie the words to the dying thief: 'To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise'? If we take 'Paradise' in the light of contemporary Jewish usage, it

[1] Josephus, *Antiq.* xviii. 1. 3.

[2] Cf. Clemen, p. 151; König, *Die Lehre von Christi Höllenfahrt*, p. 8.

might mean a *future* place of bliss prepared for the righteous, *e.g.* in the third Heaven, after they have sojourned in the intermediate state of waiting (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 4; *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, viii. 1 f.). It also meant the *present* intermediate dwelling-place of righteous souls (*e.g.* towards the north-west, *Book of Enoch*, lxx. 3 f.). From the latter it might be supposed that Paradise was equivalent to Abraham's Bosom, and was a name for the better part of Sheol. This, though supported by many theologians,[1] cannot definitely be proved from contemporary Jewish thought.[2] But as S. Luke, who preserves this saying, has also in Acts ii. the sermon of S. Peter in which Christ's soul is said to have been in Hades (vv. 24, 27, 31), the Petrine tradition might have regarded Paradise as equivalent to Abraham's Bosom. The phrase might also be a general reference to the future state of the righteous. Gschwind's view is interesting.[3] Christ answered the robber in terms of his own thought. He wished to be remembered by Christ when His Kingdom came. The answer is that even now the Kingdom was coming and he would share in it. 'Under the symbol of Paradise Christ reveals to him that he need not wait for the coming of Messiah, but that the Paradise-time, the Salvation-time, was now dawning, and that, on that very day, he would know the reality of the Messianic deliverance. Christ has thus less in view the place. He lays stress on the immediate fulfilling of the robber's wish, the speedy occurrence of the deliverance, the arrival of the Messianic salvation. The phrase "to be in Paradise" is thus to be conceived eschatologically, and implies as much as "to be delivered," "to attain salvation."' This, as Gschwind says, overcomes the difficulty which all exegesis

[1] *e.g.* Schmidt, *TU* xliii. 461; Clemen. p. 159; R. C. Charles, *Eschatology*[2], p. 473, *EBi* 1388, cf. T. Zahn, *Kommentar zu NT*, Leipzig, 1903–13, vol. iii. on Luke xxiii. 43.

[2] See p. 280, *supra*.

[3] Gschwind, p. 153.

has felt—how could Christ be in Hades and Paradise at the same time ?

After all, our Lord, in using current language and conceptions, did not necessarily speak with the dogmatic exactitude which theologians desire. The idea that His Soul was in Hades was inevitable to the apostles, and this is seen from the passages already considered (Acts ii. 24, 27, 31 ; Rom. x. 7, cf. vi. 4, 5 ; Eph. iv. 8 f.). This is the simplest form and the germ of the Descent doctrine—the presence of the Soul of Christ with the souls of the dead in the Underworld.

But the question was bound to arise, What did Christ's Soul do there, or what was the result of that Presence in Hades ? Bound up with this was the idea of theodicy. Christ had come in the fulness of time on earth, but what of the generations who died before His coming ? The apostles, interested probably in these subjects, would tend to think, and their Jewish traditions would help them to think, that as Christ was active for good on earth, so also would He be in Hades, that as He preached the good news on earth, so also would He preach it in Hades. This would be a natural deduction from their knowledge of Him. For, according to His own intention, the Gospel was to be preached to the whole world (S. Mark xiv. 9, xvi. 15), and if to those now existing or afterwards to be born, why not also to those who had departed from it. ' To this end also (*i.e.* that I may preach) came I forth ' (S. Mark i. 38). It was not the will of the Father that one of these little ones should perish (S. Matt. xviii. 14).[1] Was this mercy limited to those on earth ?

This question of theodicy is raised at a later time by Clement of Alexandria, who cites the *Preaching of Peter*, and says that the moral government of God necessitates that those who had no opportunity of knowing the truth in this world, should be granted it elsewhere, otherwise they would have no proper

[1] Tatian, *Diatessaron*, § 76, 7, adds here, ' but seeketh for their repentance.'

probation.[1] 'Would you wish,' says S. Cyril of Jerusalem, 'that the living should participate in the fruits of grace, and deprive of them those who lived in earlier days?'[2] The heathen opponent in Arnobius' *Disputationes adversus Gentes* raises this question, What of the pre-Christian dead? The answer is: Can you know what has been done to them? To them also royal mercy has been imparted. They have been liberated, and have laid aside the lot and condition of mortality.[3]

The Church took the view that those who died before Christ came—or, at least, certain of them—had benefited by His presence in Hades. To the question, Had His Spirit been idle there? the answer was given in the negative. He had preached in Hades.

A suggestion of enlightenment in the Underworld might have been derived from the words of Isaiah (lxi. 1) read by our Lord in the synagogue at Nazareth: 'He hath sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives' (S. Luke iv. 18). Two other sayings, both in S. John (v. 25, 28–29), must have been suggestive in the formation of a tradition, whatever their precise meaning was: 'The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. . . . The hour cometh, in which all that are in their tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.' If these sayings, or, at all events, the first of them, were taken as prophetic of the Preaching in Hades, they also suggest that the Preaching would bear fruit, as is indeed seen in the words, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and He saw it and was glad.' With minds imbued with Messianic hopes, with the belief that the righteous would rise to share in the Messianic kingdom, or with the tradition of the removal of sinners from Hades, the idea of a transference of the righteous from Hades to a better

[1] Clem. *Strom.* vi. 48.
[2] Cyril, *Catech.* iv. 3.
[3] Arnob. *Disp.* ii. 63.

state, or even of their resurrection, would easily arise, first in simple form, then more pictorially and dramatically.

This would also imply a submission of Death and the powers of Hades to Christ, their Victor by the Resurrection. At first, it is true, there is the idea that God raised up Jesus from the dead, before He is Himself viewed as raising Himself and thus gaining a Personal triumph over Death and Hades.[1]

We see, then, how easily and naturally the belief in the Descent and its results, as formulated in orthodox tradition, might arise. Was it only a natural deduction or did the tradition of the results of the Descent owe anything to our Lord's teaching after His Resurrection ?

In trying to answer this question we must keep in mind two facts : (1) our Lord's constant reticence both with regard to the Other World and with regard to Himself, and (2) the whole nature of the Descent doctrine with its notions of a local Underworld, a Preaching to souls imprisoned there, and their rescue from it.

The whole doctrine is conceived in terms of current belief regarding life beyond the grave. Thus we are led to suppose that if our Lord spoke of the experiences of His Soul in the unseen, He would give no more than a hint of these, and this hint, in all probability, would most likely be given in terms of current belief. Our Lord constantly made use of current beliefs in current language without necessarily adopting these as literally true.[2] But whether our Lord spoke simply of His presence with the dead, or of a Descent, or a Preaching, or a transference of souls to a higher state—the last probably signifying no more than an acceptance of the good news and

[1] Acts ii. 24, 32, iii. 15, iv. 10, x. 40, xiii. 30, 34, 37, xvii. 31 ; Rom. iv. 24, vi. 4, viii. 11 ; 1 S. Pet. i. 21.

[2] Cf. the Temptation narratives, the Eschatological discourses, etc. See also my article ' Eschatology ' in *ERE* v. 384.

hence a new spiritual outlook, it is impossible to say. Granting that revelation, we may presume at least that it was hinted that souls had now the means of attaining greater knowledge, of advancing in that educative process which we conceive the future life to be. They were released, as it were, from a Hades condition. But as Hades, Paradise, Heaven, were regarded as local places, the conception of release from a Hades condition of ignorance became one of release from an actual Hades, and transference to an actual Paradise, probably in the minds of some of the apostles or their immediate followers, unless they also spoke in metaphor. There were conjoined with this the belief in the deception of Satan, in the breaking of the gates of Hades, the binding or destroying of its rulers, in the appearance in bodily form of those released, in the preaching of the forerunner and of successors (the apostles). The revealing hint, if given, was enlarged, expressed in terms of current belief, while the more romantic and striking aspects—the Conquest and Rescue, rather than the Preaching—became more popular. The writers who refer merely to an enlightenment of souls in Hades may represent a striving to keep to the old tradition, and an opposition to the more popular aspects of the belief.

That a Descent doctrine did exist in early times without the aid of Pagan myths, and already tending to take various forms, is seen from the apostolic references already considered. It rapidly became popular, and it lent itself to vigorous rhetorical and fictitious treatment, as we see from preachers and poets in the fourth and fifth centuries. A Descent legend grew, and its explicit and most detailed form is found in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. That the doctrine, or the legend constructed from it, arose quite naturally in Christian or Jewish-Christian circles, without aid from Paganism, is seen from the language used by the earliest writers who refer to it. Thus, those who benefit from the Preaching are 'those that slept' (*Gospel of Peter*,

Justin, Irenæus, *Hermas*). While death as a sleep is not the metaphor of any one people, it is frequently used in Hebrew thought (Dan. xii. 1 ; 2 Esd. vii. 32 ; Sir. xxiv. 32, Latin, *omnes dormientes* ; cf. Ps. xvii. 15 ; Isa. xxvi. 19), and recurs in the New Testament (S. John xi. 11 ; 1 Cor. xv. 31 ; Eph. v. 14). The idea of ' spirits in prison ' was also familiar from Old Testament and Apocryphal passages. The further embellishments of the belief can all be traced, as we have seen, to Jewish thought, and are, indeed, generally referred back to prophetic passages in the Old Testament by Christian writers.[1] Thus the earliest language used regarding the Descent is at once Jewish and Christian. If the belief arose in Jewish-Christian circles, we can understand why interest was excited in the fate of the Old Testament saints.

That early Christianity in its popular forms produced many legends is well known—the apocryphal Gospels read in orthodox circles are examples of this. It is strange, therefore, that the Descent doctrine in its more legendary forms, and particularly in the whole legend as found in *Nicodemus*, should be so frequently referred back to Pagan beliefs, as if the early Christians were incapable of forming a legend and must always borrow materials for it. The details of the Descent legend in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* are one and all supported by or described in Biblical language or referred back to Jewish tradition. That in itself, apart from other considerations, is sufficient to show that this interesting document does not borrow from Pagan conceptions.

[1] See Additional Notes, 19.

CHAPTER XX

THE PERMANENT VALUE OF THE DESCENT DOCTRINE

The comparative study of religions, with the light which it has shed on beliefs, myths, and rites of all times and all races, has had a curious influence on certain minds. They have been driven to see resemblances where these are merely superficial, or to speak of borrowings by one religion from another where no possibility of borrowing existed. It has become a passion with many to derive Christian beliefs from existing Pagan myths, which generally have only a remote likeness to them. The conditions of a legitimate comparison are not always understood by those who use the comparative method, still less by many who read their books. An equal lack of understanding prevails regarding the possibilities of mutual influence, or of similar beliefs arising independently under similar conditions and among similar minds. Nor, again, does it ever seem to have been considered by those who insist on deriving Christian beliefs from Pagan myths that mythical presuppositions may have had actual fulfilments. The hopes of Paganism may have been answered by what are claimed to be the facts of Christianity. Recklessness and an airy confidence have taken the place of cautious proceeding, and this very confidence and a specious air of *vraisemblance* have captivated many. Where Christianity is concerned it is too often forgotten that spiritual things should be compared with spiritual, not with what are material or have a material origin. We cannot assume that the

doctrines of an ethical and spiritual faith have been produced from highly sensuous nature cults and myths.

As for the doctrine of the Descent into Hades, its origin in Pagan myths has been assumed by many writers. Professor Gardner derives it from the myth and cult of Orpheus; Bousset and Pfleiderer, Cheyne and Gunkel, from the myths of Babylonia as they filtered through Mandæism and Gnosticism.[1] The preceding chapters have shown how unnecessary and unlikely such a derivation is. This is also the conclusion reached by Clemen and Loofs. Clemen writes: 'The theory that Jesus preached in Hades was one so obvious, if earlier generations had lived without knowledge of the Gospel, that it could arise, in fact was bound to arise, even in the absence of any foreign prototype.'[2] Loofs writes: 'The many and various parallels that have been pointed out are—as parallels—anything but convincing; the similarities are nothing like so many as the differences, and the hypothesis that these exotic ideas exerted an influence upon the genesis of the *Descensus*-idea not only remains unproved, but is in the highest degree improbable.'[3] Again: 'Who can believe, without being otherwise convinced, that the Palestinian Christians of the apostolic age were acquainted with Orpheus going down to the Underworld, with the Babylonian myth of Ištar's descent to hell, or with Hibil-Ziwā, the divine visitor and vanquisher of hell in Mandeism?'[4]

[1] P. Gardner, *Exploratio Evangelica*, London, 1899, pp. 265 ff.; W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, pp. 255 ff.; O. Pfleiderer, *The Early Christian Conception of Christ*, pp. 97 ff.; T. Cheyne, *Bible Problems*, London, 1904, pp. 103 ff.; H. Gunkel, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständniss des Neuen Test.*, Göttingen, 1910, p. 72. Cf. H. Zimmer, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alt-Test.*[3], Berlin, 1903, pp. 388, 563; A. Meyer, *Die Auferstehung Christi*, Tübingen, 1905, pp. 10, 80.

[2] Clemen, *Primitive Christianity and Its Non-Jewish Sources*, Edinburgh, 1912, pp. 199–200; cf. his *Niedergefahren zu den Toten*, pp. 134 ff.

[3] Loofs, 'Descent to Hades (Christ's),' *ERE* iv. 662.

[4] *Ibid.* in *TCHR* ii. 300.

The doctrine was the result of the existing mental conceptions of the first believers, derived from their traditional beliefs and expectations, and also, possibly, aided by some hint from our Lord Himself. When the phrase 'He descended into Hades' became, at least for Western Christendom, an article of faith by being placed in the Apostles' Creed, 'it came weighted, so to speak, with all the associations that had gathered round it.'[1]

Nevertheless, the form and colouring of the doctrine are largely mythological, *i.e.* it is expressed in terms of current belief regarding the Other World and fanciful adaptations of Jewish ideas. That above the earth is Heaven, and below the earth is Hades, and that souls of the dead go to the subterranean Hades, is a mythical conception. Yet this underlies the whole doctrine as it was held in the early Church and for centuries after. It should not be forgotten, however, that behind all myths there is some reality of which they are the more or less symbolic expression. The cosmogonic myth of Heaven and Hades is merely an objective expression of the fact of a future state in which men continue to exist after death. Obviously, then, in whatever relation our Lord is placed with regard to this cosmogonic myth, as in the Descent-story, there is a striving to express what may have been really true, though mythical in the form in which that truth was expressed. Mythical to us who do not accept the old cosmogony, but not to those who did accept it. The mythical form of a doctrine does not necessarily rob it of essential truth.

The simple form of the doctrine—that of a Preaching in Hades, along with the symbolic phrases which expressed the result of the Descent—soon gave place to a popular, highly coloured, and mythical presentation, as in the *Gospel of Nico-*

[1] E. H. Plumptre, in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, ii. 196.

demus; yet even here it was Christian fancy which was at work on its own, not on Pagan, materials.

We do not now believe in a local and underground place of the dead, and we are less prone to dogmatize upon those regions whither the dead pass. Hence the old doctrine of the Descent, whether in its simpler or more complex forms, need not be taken literally. Yet we cannot regard it as mere 'dead wood from the tree of Christian doctrine,'[1] or consider it fitting that the churches distinguished as Evangelical should 'omit the article *descendit ad inferos* from their programme of instruction in Christian doctrine and worship.'[2]

Whether we believe that our Lord Himself gave a hint of the truth in this matter, or whether we believe that the doctrine rests on supposition, it has still an abiding value. The hint of our Lord, if given, could not be passed over by those who accept Him as their Master. And even the supposition, mythically expressed as it may be, is at least consistent with what we know of the love of God. Men are coming to assume more and more that all God's dealings with them are of the nature of an educative process, that this process is continued in the Other World, and that, however painful to some souls it may be, it is in the end salutary, a process with an ethical and spiritual purpose. Men feel that they are not wrong when they seem

> 'to hear a Heavenly Friend,
> And through thick veils to apprehend
> A labour working to an end.'

There is much in the teaching of the New Testament to support this view of the present and the future life. And indeed the doctrine of the Descent, the Preaching, and the Rescue of Souls is an ancient, and should be a permanent, symbol of this view. This growing moralization of the whole conception of

[1] Gardner, *op. cit.* p. 263.

[2] Loofs, *ERE* iv. 663.

the future life is akin to the teaching of Origen, and perhaps owes not a little to the noble thoughts of this great teacher, so long neglected, but who must surely come into his own. He taught that all natures would advance through each stage beyond the grave to a better condition, and at last reach that which is invisible and eternal, having by a kind of training travelled through every single office of the heavenly powers. God will be all in all when every rational understanding is cleansed, and when all it thinks and feels or understands is wholly God.[1]

Interpreted in terms of modern belief, the doctrine of the Descent suggests two points which we may take as our guides. First, our Lord passed into that state or those conditions in which the disembodied dead are. This is expressed in the old formula, 'He descended into Hell,' and it teaches that our Lord did not heal the wounds of His people slightly, but that He willed to experience all that we must undergo. We are assured of this without any dogmatizing regarding what that state or those conditions are. Second, as to the Preaching to the souls of the dead. In what manner this was done, or under what conditions, we need not seek to know. Suffice it for us that we cannot imagine our Lord in the Other World without His continuing that gracious work which characterized His life on earth. If this be a supposition and no more, it is warranted by all else that we know of Him. 'Never man spake like this man.' 'He spake as one having authority.' Must not the souls of the disembodied dead have felt this as our Lord communicated to them, in those subtle ways which must be open to souls passed from present bodily limitations, that Gospel of love which He preached on earth, and which was now made for ever effective by the Atonement wrought by Him? They must have known and have been enriched by the presence of

[1] Origen, *de Principiis*, i. 6. 3, iii. 6. 3.

One mighty to save. Like the common people on earth, they must have heard Him gladly, and, with Abraham, rejoiced to see His day. If we believe that it is possible for the soul beyond the grave to obtain forgiveness and to progress in knowledge and enlightenment, it is clear that the presence of our Lord in the Other World and His communication with souls there, must have been a great stage of progress in their spiritual growth. It was thus with men on earth; but should we limit our Lord's work to this earth? With S. Augustine, we 'cannot believe that Christ went down to Hades in vain.'[1] With Origen, we hold that 'every place has need of Christ.' Of the souls of the dead we may well believe, with S. Clement of Alexandria, that 'there took place a universal movement and translation through the administration of the Saviour.'

As our Lord—a Soul among souls—was active in the Other World and strong to heal and save, this gives us ground for believing that He still makes His power and influence felt upon the souls of the dead. The Atonement is past, but Christ, the atoning Personality, still lives, 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Must we limit the power of the Atonement to our short lives in this fleeting world? The old legend of Christ's carrying His cross to Hades and leaving it erected there after He had rescued souls and spoiled the spoiler of his prey, witnesses to a profound truth. The Cross, the Crucified Saviour, is active in the Other World as on this earth. The love of God is not limited to earth and time. In some such way as this we may still find abiding value in the old and beautiful ideas of a Descent to a local Hades, of a Preaching there, or of a conquest of Death and Hades, and a Harrowing of Hell. Both the old and the new thoughts afford us ground for believing that, beyond the grave, if men suffer for sin, the love of God prevails to lead souls onwards and ever onwards to Him and to His peace.

[1] Aug. *Ep. ad Evod.* clxiv.

The long-continued and extreme popularity of the Descent, whether expressed as doctrine or as legend, in the pulpit, in art, in verse or the drama, shows an instinctive belief in God's love beyond the grave. This of itself should make us pause before attempting to delete from the Creed the article which tells us that Christ descended into Hell.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

1. Page 78.

Passages resembling this occur in Hippolytus, *Comm. on Daniel*, iv. 39. 6 (ed. Bonwetsch and Achelis, i. 1. 288): 'At His Parousia what is above (τὰ ἄνω) must become below (κάτω) in order that what is below (τὰ κάτω) may become above (τὰ ἄνω)'; and *On the Great Ode* (p. 96, *supra*): καὶ τὸν κάτω εἰς τὰ ἄνω ἀνενέγκας. According to the so-called second Epistle of S. Clement, *c.* 250 (xii. 2), quoting, as does Clement of Alexandria, the Gospel according to the Egyptians, Christ said that His Kingdom would come 'when the two shall be one, and the outside as the inside.' A saying of Christ's, resembling this, but with more detail, is found in the *Apocryphal Acts*, e.g. *Acts of Peter*, c. 33: 'Unless ye make the things of the right hand those of the left, and those of the left as those of the right, and those that are above as those below, and those that are behind as those that are before, ye shall not have knowledge of the Kingdom.' The similar words in *Acts of Philip*, c. 140, have also 'all the world is turned the wrong way, and every soul in it,' this having been caused by Adam's fall. This is more fully explained in *Acts of Peter*, c. 38. Adam fell head downwards and thus changed the whole disposition of things—things of the right hand into those of the left, etc. Analogous passages occur in *Acts of Andrew* (Martyrdom section, James, p. 359), *Acts of Thomas*, c. 147, and *Acts of John*, c. 98. A reference to 'those of the left hand' occurs in Ephrem Syrus, Hymn 36, p. 112, *supra*. Zahn traces the source of the words in the Mystagogia to the *Acts of Peter* (*Neue Kirchl. Zeitschr.* xi. 438 f.). Hippolytus, however, may be the first to use it. The conception is frequently found in passages on the Descent, about Adam, bound in Hades, being brought up to freedom..

2. Page 132.

Ode xvii., 'they gathered themselves to Me.' Cf. *Ode* xlii., 'I made a congregation of living men among his dead ones'; *Nicod.* Latin A, c. 8, 'all the saints were gathered in one under the Lord's hand'; Latin B, c. 9, 'they gathered them beneath the hands of the Lord'; *Acts of Thomas* (Syriac, Wright, ii. 187), 'collected his possessions into one blessed place of waiting.'

3. Page 132.

Ode xxii., the seven-headed dragon is here possibly Satan as a world-power, not necessarily lord of Hades, but there is some reference to the monsters of Rev. xii. 3, xiii. 1, and also to the Semitic primeval dragon foe of Ps. lxxiv. 13, 'the dragon in the waters.' In early Christian thought the dragon was (1) the devil (cf. Test. of Asher, interpolated passage, p. 201, *supra*); (2) Sheol or Hades (cf. *Ep. of Pilate* p. 144, *supra*), the 'many-headed dragon' of the Greek text, is in the Syriac text 'Sheol'; (3) Death (cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, p. 128, *supra*), Christ's body was a bait to Death that the dragon, lying in wait to devour Him, might cast forth those already devoured. Cf. *Test. of Abraham*, cc. 16, 17, Death is like a dark serpent with seven dragon-heads and fourteen faces.

The dragon's 'poison' is 'the poison of error and seduction' with which he works on men in this life. His 'roots' are sin, cf. *Nicod.* Gk. c. 7, 'O thou chief devil, the beginning of death, the root of sin,' and *Gospel of Philip* (Epiph. *Hær.* xxvi. 13), 'I have rooted out his (the Archon's) roots.'

Ibid., 'those who believe in Thee,' cf. S. John Baptist's words in Hades (*Nicod.* c. 2), 'the Son of God cometh hither, that whosoever believeth on Him may be saved.'

4. Page 133.

Ode xlii., 'Gall and bitterness to it' (Death), based on Isa. xiv. 9 (Sept.): 'Hades from beneath is embittered at meeting thee.' In *Gos. of Nic.* Latin A, c. 4, Satan causes gall and vinegar to be given to Christ: now He is gall and bitterness to Death.

Ibid., 'I went down with it to the extreme of its depth.' Bernard points out that if the reading were, 'He went down with him,' *i.e.* Hades went down with Death, a parallel would be found in *Gos. of Nic.* Lat. B, c. 24, where Hades takes Satan and is cast with him into the depth of the bottomless pit. But the reading in the text is illustrated from *Gos. of Nic.* Lat. A, c. 7, where Christ is said to have broken 'the strong depths of the prisons,' and *Acts of Thomas* (Syriac, Wright, ii. 155): 'Thou didst descend to Sheol and go to its uttermost end.'

Ibid., 'those who had died ran to Me.' This running of the saints in Hades to meet Christ occurs in Marcion's doctrine of the Descent: Cain and the others 'ran (*accucurrissent*) to Him' (Iren. i. 27. 3); in Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catech.* xiv. 19): 'the prophets with Moses, Abraham, etc., ran to Him'; in *Acts of Thomas* (c. 156): 'gathering together all who fled for refuge to Thee.' Similarly, in the Hom. of Pseudo-Epiphanius, when S. John Baptist appears in Hades the dead ran to him (Migne, *PG* lxxxvi. 1. 513). Cf. the note on 'gathered,' *supra*.

5. Page 161.

'He did not rise alone, but raised many other dead men who appeared in Jerusalem.' This resembles the statement in the *Teaching of Addai*: 'He descended alone and rose with many,' which is repeated in later writers, as if it were a stock phrase, *e.g.* the addition to Ignatius, *Ep. ad Trall.*, 'He descended into Hades alone, but came back with a great multitude,' the preceding sentence speaking of those who appeared in Jerusalem; Ephrem Syrus, *Hom. for Easter Eve* (see p. 114, *supra*): 'I descended alone to Hades, but with thousands and myriads I ascended,' and another *Hom.* speaks of Jesus going through Hades alone carrying His Cross, but when He rose the dead arose with Him, p. 115, *supra*. Macarius of Jerusalem, at the first council of Nicæa, 325 A.D.: 'Descending alone, He came back with a multitude'; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. Lect.* (see p. 127, *supra*): 'Our Lord descended into Hades alone, but ascended thence with a great company,' followed by a reference to the resurrection of the saints. One of the *Odes of Solomon*, xlii., echoes this: 'Death cast Me up and many along with Me.' The *Acts of Callistratus* also contains the phrase (p. 130 *supra*). Cf. Venantius Fortunatus,

p. 129, *supra*: 'Thou didst rescue a countless host from Death's prison.'

As to Christ's descending alone, *i.e.* unaccompanied by angels, this is the earlier tradition and is emphasized by Origen (on Ps. xxii. 11, 'there is none to help'): 'none (of the angels) dared to descend with Him'; and Eus. of Cæsarea (*Dem. Ev.* x. 8, on the same passage): 'none of the angels ventured to enter Hades with Christ.' On the other hand early tradition speaks of angels being with Christ, *e.g.* Ephrem Syrus, Hymn 36, 'the Watchers (angels) have entered, and the dead have gone forth.' The presence of angels is seen in the *Gospel of Nicod.* Gk. c. 6, where Christ delivers Satan to them to bind him, and c. 5, where the angels reply to the question of Hades: 'Who is this King of Glory?' In c. 9, Lat. A, Christ delivers Adam to Michael, and the saints follow him to Paradise. In Eus. of Alex. (*Hom. for Easter Eve*, p. 180, *supra*) the Powers run before Christ to Hades and command the doors to be opened. In Pseudo-Epiph. (*Hom. for Easter Eve*, p. 193, *supra*) Christ descends with hosts of angels and archangels, and their work in Hades is described. The *Questions of Bartholomew* speaks of the angels bidding the powers of Hades remove the gates (p. 145, *supra*).[1] All this emphasizes the triumphal entry of Christ to Hades, and is different from the conception of His being there as 'a soul among souls' or 'in the form and condition of a dead man' (Tert. *de Anima*, c. 55). The triumphal entry, prefiguring the Second Advent, is emphasized in Syriac literature, though by no means solely there, *e.g. Acts of Thomas*, c. 156: 'who didst go down to Hades with great power . . . and Thou camest up with great glory' (cf. S. Matt. xxiv. 30, the Second Advent, 'with power and great glory'). Cf. Athanas. *de Virg.* c. 16, 'Who is this descending in authority and great power?'; *Nicod.* c. 6, 'Who art Thou that hast so great authority and power?' and the questions in the Mystagogia, pp. 77 ff., *supra*; *Nicod.* c. 6, Lat. A, 'the King of Glory in His majesty trampled on Satan.' This aspect of the Descent is emphasized in Ephrem Syrus and Aphraates.

The presence of angels with Christ on His Ascension is often mentioned (see Additional Notes, *infra*, p. 333).

[1] In the *Questions of S. Bartholomew* Christ descends at the request of S. Michael, and in the *Acts of Andrew and Paul* S. Michael is with Christ n His Descent, pp. 145, 148, *supra*.

6. Page 161.

The light in Hades at midnight. In Lat. A this is followed by the appearance of Simeon, who speaks of the Child Jesus. Simeon, presumably, had died soon after receiving the Child in his arms. Is this light a reflexion of the 'glory of the Lord' which shone at the moment of the Nativity (S. Luke ii. 9)? Probably not, as it was seen by the sons of Simeon who had died shortly before the Crucifixion. It is the light heralding the coming of the Sun of Righteousness to Hades. Though the *Egyptian Church Order* directs prayer to be made at the ninth hour, commemorating the Descent, Athanasius, *de Virginitate*, c. 16 (p. 79, *supra*), speaks of the Descent as occurring at the twelfth hour. Many references to the Descent speak of Hades as being illuminated by the appearance of Christ. Cf. Eus. of Alex., p. 174, *supra*, for the light at S. John Baptist's coming. In the *Protevangelium*, xix. 2, first a bright cloud overshadows the cave where Christ is born, then a great light appears in the cave, withdrawing little by little till the Child appears (the Sun of Righteousness). At Christ's Baptism, a great light shone from the water, according to the additions to S. Matt. iii. 17 in Codex Vercellensis and Codex Sangermanensis, and in the *Gospel of the Ebionites* a great light shone about the place (Epiph. *Hær.* xxx.). This light at the Baptism is mentioned by some of the Fathers.

7. Page 162.

The story of Seth's seeking the oil of mercy is probably taken from the Jewish *Apoc. of Moses*, c. 13 (*c.* 100 A.D.), where, of course, the account of Christ's coming at the end of five thousand five hundred years is not given; but there is a prophecy of all flesh being raised at the great day, and the delights of Paradise being given to the saints. This prophecy is omitted in *Nicod.*, and its place is taken by the prophecy of Christ's coming and anointing Adam, etc. The Latin *Vita Adæ*, c. 41, here follows *Nicod.* almost literally. The passage is thus a Christian interpolation in the *Vita*.[1] In the medieval legend of the Cross, Seth obtains a branch or seeds of the tree, which he plants on Adam's grave, and the wood

[1] *The Apocrypha and Pseudep. of the Old Test.*, ed. R. H. Charles, Oxford, 1913, ii. 132, 141 f.

is then used long after for the Cross. Jewish tradition regarded the Tree of Life as still existing in Paradise, and its wonders are described in the *Book of Enoch*, cc. 24, 25, and in the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, c. 8, where God rests on it when He comes to Paradise ; beside it is an olive tree, always distilling oil. The tree with its fruits and healing is to be made manifest or given to the righteous at the end of the world (*Enoch*, c. 25 ; 4 Esd. viii. 52 and vii. 123 ; cf. Rev. ii. 7, xxii. 2, 14 ; *Nicod.* c. 3, Lat. A). The anointing with the oil of mercy from the tree in *Nicod.* is obviously connected with the use of oil in baptism. The Cross was connected with the tree of life (see *infra*) or with an oil tree in Paradise, and so with the use of oil in baptismal and initiatory ceremonies. This was not an exclusively Gnostic idea, but it fitted in with Gnostic as well as Ebionite views. In the *Clementine Recognitions* the Son of God is said to be called Christ because He was anointed with oil from the tree of life, and He now anoints with similar oil all who inherit His Kingdom. This corresponds to the announcement in *Nicod.* : ' with the oil of mercy shall He anoint all that believe in Him ' (Lat. A). In Ophite initiation ceremonies the candidate said : ' I have been anointed with white ointment from the tree of life ' (Origen, *contra Celsum*, vi. 27). In the anointing prayers in the *Acts of Thomas*, tree and Cross are mystically related, and the oil is connected with both ; the oil is the ' hidden mystery in which the Cross is revealed to us ' (cc. 157, 121). The mystic association of oil with the Cross, identified with the tree of life, was doubtless a popular idea shared by Catholics and Gnostics.

8. Page 162.

The date of the Incarnation given in Seth's story, five thousand five hundred years from Creation, belongs to a chronological system popular in the early centuries. The *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. 15) and Irenæus (v. 28. 3) show that as the Creation was accomplished in six days, and that as ' one day is with the Lord as a thousand years ' (2 S. Pet. iii. 8 ; Ps. xc. 4), so in six thousand years all things will be consummated ; then will begin the Sabbath or millennial rest. There were thus six ages of the world, each of a thousand years. According to computations based on current chronology, the Incarnation took place in the middle of the last

thousand years, 5500. This date is found in Theophilus (*c.* 180), *ad Autolycum*, iii. 28; in Julius Africanus (early third century), *Chron.*; in Hippolytus, and in many others.

9. Page 164.

The raising of Lazarus is also spoken of by Hades in Euseb. of Alex., *Hom. on the Devil and Hades*, with gruesome details of corruption, as if his body was in Hades. Eusebius repeats the phrase of *Nicod.* about Lazarus flying away like an eagle (p. 177, *supra*), but has ἐξήλατο for ἐξεπέτασεν. Lat. A, 'leaped forth like an eagle,' recalls Wisd. xviii. 15: 'Thine all-powerful Word leaped from Heaven out of the royal throne.' In the Coptic fragments relating to our Lord's Ministry there is an account of the raising of Lazarus, in which he tells how the Voice sounded in Amente (Hades), 'Lazarus, come forth,' and how Adam knew it and certified of it (Robinson, *Coptic Apoc. Gospels*, in *TS* iv. 2. 168). In *Nicod.*, Lat. A, Hades heard the Voice and quaked with fear; in Eusebius, Christ comes to the gate of Hades and cries, 'Come forth.'

10. Page 165.

While the words of Ps. xxiv. 7 f., 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates' (Sept., 'Lift up your gates, O ye princes'), were applied to the keepers (princes) of the gates of Hades, here and in other passages on the Descent (see Chapter XIII.) the question, 'Who is this King of Glory?' being put in the mouth of Hades or his servants (cf. Euseb. of Alexandria and Pseudo-Epiph., pp. 180, 193, *supra*), in earlier writers they are applied to the Ascension and entry into Heaven. The angels or rescued souls attending Christ on His way cry to those keeping the gates of Heaven to open them. These guardians, unaware of Christ's Incarnation, ask, 'Who is this King of Glory?' and are then told by the attendant angels. This is found first in Justin Martyr. When Christ ascended into Heaven 'the rulers (ἄρχοντες) of Heaven, under appointment of God, are commanded to open the gates of Heaven, that He who is the King of Glory may enter in. . . . For when the rulers of Heaven saw Him of uncomely and dishonoured appearance and without glory, they asked, "Who is this King of Glory?" And

the Holy Spirit, in the Person of the Father or in His own Person, answers them: "The Lord of Hosts: He is this King of Glory"' (*Dial.* c. 36). Cf. also c. 85, where he shows that the command to lift up the gates was given to angels and powers in Heaven. Irenæus speaks of the heralds of Christ's Resurrection bidding the princes of the Heavens open the eternal gates that the King of Glory may enter (v. 33. 13), and in his *Epideixis*, c. 48, citing the Psalm, he says that the everlasting doors are the Heavens. But because the Logos descended in a manner invisible to created beings, they knew nothing of this. But now the Logos become flesh was ascending visibly. As the Powers saw Him, the lower angels cried to them, 'Lift up,' etc. The Powers were astonished and asked, 'Who is this?' The others, who had seen Him, declared, 'The Lord strong and mighty.' Hippolytus (frag. in Theodoret on Ps. xxiv. 7, *Griech. Schriftsteller*, ii. 2. 147) speaks of the angels travelling with Christ to the heavenly gates, which were closed, and where the heavenly Powers first saw Him. Therefore the angels, running before Him, said to them, 'Lift up,' etc. Tertullian also refers to the eternal gates (of Heaven) being lifted up that the King of Glory, who had bought man from the earth, nay, from the Underworld (*ab inferis*), might enter into the Heavens (*de Fuga in Persec.* c. 12). The application of the Psalm to the gates of Heaven and the ignorance of the angels there is also found in Firmicus Maternus, Ambrose, and others (see pp. 119, 120, *supra*). The triumphal return of Christ to Heaven with angels or with those whom He has rescued from Hades, but without reference to the Psalm, is found with glowing rhetoric in several writers who speak first of the Descent—Pseudo-Athanasius, Prudentius, Synesius, the *Book of the Resurrection, Acts of Thomas*, c. 156 (these are cited in Chapters VII. and VIII.).

The 'princes' who are bidden to lift up their gates are the powers of Hades or the heavenly angels, according as the Psalm is applied to the Descent or the Ascension.

11. Page 166.

'All whatsoever thou didst gain by the tree (ξύλον) of knowledge' ('tree of transgression,' Lat. A) 'thou hast lost by the tree of the Cross.' Cf. our Lord's words to the saints, c. 8: 'as many

as have suffered death through the tree which this man touched, I raise you up through the tree of the Cross' ; or Lat. A, 'Ye who were condemned by the tree and the devil and death, see now the devil and death condemned by the tree.' Cf. Euseb. of Alex. *Hom. for Easter Eve* : 'He was crucified on the tree that He might take away the sin caused by the tree. For through the tree Satan expelled Adam from Paradise, and through the tree the Lord displayed the city of Paradise to the thief.' 'He healed the tree by the tree.' This contrast of the tree which caused Adam's sin and the tree of the Cross, the tree of life, was made in early times and was a fruitful theme for centuries. We shall cite some of the earlier passages. Irenæus (v. 16. 3) says : Christ healed 'the disobedience wrought at the tree by the obedience which was also at the tree,' and (v. 17. 3, 4) 'as by the tree we were made debtors to God, so by the Tree we may receive remission of our sins,' . . . 'as by wood we lost Him, by wood He was again made manifest to all.'

Tertullian (*adv. Judæos*, c. 13) says : 'That which formerly perished through the tree in Adam should be restored through the tree in Christ.'

Origen, in answer to a statement of Celsus, based on Gnostic writings, about a tree of life and a resurrection of flesh by means of a tree, says : 'Through the tree came death and through the tree comes life, because death was in Adam and life in Christ' (*contra Celsum*, vi. 34).

Ephrem Syrus has : 'As through the tree mankind fell into Sheol, so on the tree they passed to the dwellings of life. Through the tree by which bitterness was tasted, sweetness was now tasted' (cf. p. 115, *supra*).

John of Damascus says : 'Since through a tree came death, it was necessary that through a tree should be given life and resurrection' (*de Orth. Fide*, iv. 11). See also the Homily of Cæsarius of Arles (p. 197, *supra*).[1]

Both in Gnostic and Catholic circles the tree of life, the Cross (formed from its wood according to tradition), and Christ were mystically identified (cf. the passage quoted from Ambrose, *Ep.* v. 19, p. 121, *supra*). The Cross as a tree was a piece of symbolism

[1] Cf. a passage in the *Acts of Philip* (c. 140, James, p. 450), where Philip, hung head downwards, says that he is a type of the first man who was brought on the earth head downwards, but is now made alive from the death of his sin by the tree of the Cross.

aided by the rendering of Ps. xcvi. 10: 'The Lord hath reigned from the wood'; the words 'from the wood,' according to Justin Martyr, had been erased by the Jews (*Trypho*, c. 73, *Apol.* i. 41). Tertullian also quotes them (*adv. Judæos*, c. 10), and the passage became popular through the Latin Psalter, which adopted the words. In the *Acts of John* (*TS* v. 1. 16) the phrase occurs: 'When He was hung upon the bush (*βάτῳ*) of the Cross.'

12. Page 167.

Lat. A, 'O princeps Satan, possessor clavium inferorum.' The texts vary; codex Corsini reads: 'possessor olim infernorum'; codex Havniensis: 'possessor cloacarum atque putredinum.' Satan as possessor of the keys of the Underworld may be regarded as a later insertion in the text, due to a growing connexion in Christian thought between Satan and the Underworld. According to Rabbinic ideas God holds the keys of the sepulchres or of the resurrection of the dead (*Targ. Jon.* on Deut. xxviii. 12; *Sanh.* f. 113. 1). The devil is not lord of Hades in early Christian thought (see Chapter XIV.), and, as Harnack shows, there is no passage in which the 'gates of Hades' denote Satan's kingdom. Yet, as having 'the power of death' (Heb. ii. 14), he can be represented in *Nicod.* as 'prince and chief of death'; he brings the dead to Hades (Lat. A, c. 4), or makes them ready to be buried (Gk. c. 4). Nevertheless, though men are subdued by Satan's power, it is Hades who holds them in subjection by his own power (Lat. A, c. 4).

13. Page 167.

'Those thy riches (*illas tuas divitias*) which thou hadst gained,' Lat. A; 'all whatsoever thou didst gain,' Gk. The words reflect the passage in Isa. xlv. 2, 3, 'I will break in pieces the doors of brass . . . and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places,' so often quoted as a prophecy of the Descent. The treasures or riches of Hades are the souls of the saints. Of these, Hades or its treasuries were despoiled by Christ. Cf. Ephrem Syrus, *Hymn* 37: Death weeps for Hades when he sees her treasuries emptied; *Hom. for Easter Eve*: 'I searched through the riches and treasures of Hades'; *Hom. on our Lord*:

'He plundered its storehouses and emptied its treasures'; *Acts of Callistratus*: 'Christ brought to light the treasures of darkness'; *Acts of Thomas*, c. 10: 'Who brought up them that for many ages were shut up in the treasury of darkness.' Cf. also the Mystagogia in Arabian *Didascalia*: 'Who is this who destroys by His glory the treasurer of darkness?' S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* 61, comments on Isa. xlv. 3 that Hades held fast the holy souls and precious vessels, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, therefore they are called treasures.

14. Page 167.

The prominence given to Adam in *Nicod.* and even more in the *Hom.* of Pseudo-Epiphanius is in keeping with the tradition of his rescue in many writers, S. Augustine saying that 'it is agreed by almost the whole Church that the Lord loosed him from that prison,' and even if this cannot be proved from Scripture, yet it seems to be borne out by Wisd. x. 1 ('Wisdom guarded to the end the first-formed father of the world . . . and delivered him out of his transgression') (*ad Evod. Ep.* clxiv. 3). The release of Adam is implied in *Hermas* (*Sim.* ix. 15, 16), where the first ten stones symbolize the first generation, *i.e.* from Adam to Noah. It is expressly spoken of by Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Athanasius, Ambrose, Ephrem Syrus (frequently), and in the *Questions of Bartholomew* (see Chapters VII. and VIII. for these). Adam and the saints are already in the seventh Heaven in the *Ascension of Isaiah*. Some remarkable expressions are used of Adam. Athanasius (*de sal. Adv.* c. 9) says: 'the soul of Adam cried continually to God . . . and those detained cried with him'; cf. *Odes of Solomon*, xlii., where the souls cry to Christ, 'Son of God, have pity on us.' In Euseb. of Alex. *Hom.* 'Art Thou He,' etc., in Hades are Isaiah, '*who cried with a loud voice*,' David, Samuel, etc. Cf. Homily of Pseudo-Epiphanius, p. 192, *supra*. In Ephrem Syrus, in one Hymn, Hades offers Adam to Christ in place of all the righteous; in other passages Christ calls to Adam, who crouches at the bottom of the dark dungeon, and takes off his chains; He sought and found Adam, who cried to Him in his grief; Christ 'plunged after Adam' (pp. 112–14, *supra*). In the *Questions of Bartholomew* Adam, when raised from Hades, is seen by the apostles, carried by angels, and very great of stature (this

is in accordance with Rabbinic tradition, and in the *Book of the Resurrection* Adam is eighty cubits high, Eve fifty. Adam is also taller than the other saints seen by S. Paul in Paradise, *Apoc. of Paul*, James, p. 554). In the *Hom.* of Pseudo-Epiphanius Christ calls Adam 'My image, My form, made in My image. . . . Thou art in Me and I in thee, and in undivided person we exist.' Cf. *Nicod.* Lat. A, c. 8: 'all ye My saints which bear My image and My likeness.' In the *Questions of Bartholomew* (iv. 5), Mary calls S. Peter 'the image of Adam.' In the *Test. of Abraham*, c. 11, the patriarch saw one whose form was like Christ's sitting between the gates of Heaven and Hell (*Texts and Studies*, ii. 2. 89). In the *Apoc. of Paul*, c. 47, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, seen in Paradise, are very beautiful, 'after the appearance of Christ.'

Nicod. Lat. B. c. 9, says that Eve cast herself at the feet of Christ, kissed His hands, and said: 'Behold the hands which fashioned me.' Ephrem Syrus, *Hom. on our Lord*, speaks of Christ's coming to Eve in Hades (Adam is not mentioned here). Pseudo-Epiphanius also mentions Eve along with Adam and other saints, as rising from Hades with Christ, as does the *Book of the Resurrection.*

Many writers, however, including some of the earliest, do not mention Adam, but stress is laid on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or Abraham, with other saints, and it is curious that the *Hom.* of Eusebius, otherwise so like *Nicod.*, does not mention Adam. Origen, *in Numeros*, *Hom.* xviii. 4, commenting on Num. xxiv. 17, 'et prædabitur omnes filios Seth,' says Seth is he from whom all the human race is descended. Christ, having conquered the adverse demons, took men, held under their domination, as spoils of His victory, as it is written of Him, 'ascending on high He led captivity captive,' *i.e.* the human race whom the devil had held.

As the Cross is contrasted with the tree of knowledge, and its wood was from the tree of life, so legend spoke of Adam's body or skull being buried on Golgotha, where Christ was crucified. This was connected with his rescue from Hades and rising again, *e.g.* by Ambrose (p. 121, *supra*), Athanasius (*in Passionem et crucem*, c. 12), who says that it was fitting that Christ should say to Adam, 'Awake, thou that sleepest,' in the place where it had been said to him, 'Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return.

According to Epiphanius, *Hær.* 46, the water and blood falling from Christ on the dust of Adam caused his revival. Earlier than these, the tradition is spoken of by Origen, who says that Adam was buried in Calvary, the place of the head, so that the head of the human race might find resurrection with all people by the Resurrection of Christ who suffered there (*tract.* 35 *in Matt.*).

15. Page 167.

Lat. A, 'As Thou hast placed the token (*titulum*) of Thy glory in Heaven, and hast set up Thy Cross, a token of redemption on earth, so place in *Infernum* the sign (*signum*) of the victory of Thy Cross, that Death may no more rule.' Whether this request was granted is not said.

Lat. B, The saints begged Christ that 'He should leave the sign (*signum*) of victory, even of the holy Cross, *apud inferos*, lest its wicked ministers should prevail to retain any one accused whom the Lord absolved. And this was done, and the Lord placed His Cross in the midst of *Inferus*, which is the sign of victory and shall remain for ever.'

The three places in Lat. A where a token of victory is set up —Heaven, Earth, Hades—are connected with the universal victory of the Cross as set forth in Phil. ii. 8 f., where the exaltation of Christ is over things in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and with Eph. iii. 18, 'the breadth, length, depth, and height,' as interpreted by the Fathers of the universality of salvation through the Cross, uniting all the universe and the most diverse creatures, or the redemption extending even to Hades (cf. Greg. Nyssa, *Or. catech.* c. 32). Christ was Lord of things under the earth, says Hippolytus, because He was numbered among the dead, preaching there to the saints (*de Antichr.* c. 26). Rufinus, speaking of the Cross as a triumph and a trophy, after explaining length, height, breadth, says 'by that part (of the Cross) sunk under the earth Christ signified His bringing into subjection to Himself the kingdom of the nether world' (*Symb.* c. 14). This became a favourite explanation of these passages. In the *Apocryphal Acts* the power of the Cross in making the things of the left into the right, etc., is often emphasized (see p. 327, *supra*), and a passage in the *Acts of Andrew* speaks of the Cross stretching toward Heaven, to the right hand and to the left (to gather into one things scattered),

and planted in the earth to join (or draw up) things in the earth and under the earth unto the heavenly things (James, *op. cit.* p. 359).

The title of glory in the Heavens, now existing there, is the glory and far-reaching victory caused by the Cross, and need not be regarded as the future 'sign of the Son of Man in Heaven' (S. Matt. xxiv. 30), variously interpreted as Christ Himself, the Cross or the sign of the Cross (cf. *Ep. of Apostles*, c. 16), a solar or lunar halo, Constantine's Cross in the sky, etc. (see Thilo, *op. cit.* p. 743 f.; O. Zöckler, *The Cross of Christ*, London, 1877, pp. 429 ff.). The words in Lat. A are perhaps copied from Ps. viii. 1: 'Thou that hast set Thy glory upon the Heavens.' We may note here that Chrysostom taught that Christ did not leave His Cross on earth, but drew it up and took it to Heaven (*Hom.* 2, *de Cruce et latrone*).

Our interest lies in the setting up of the Cross or the sign of the Cross in Hades. This beautiful conception may be illustrated from other references to the Cross in this connexion. The tree of the Cross raises up those in Hades (*Nicod.* Gk. c. 8, p. 167, *supra*). In the *Odes of Solomon*, xxix., where a newly baptized Christian, connecting his deliverance with that of the Descent, says, 'I believed in the Lord's Christ, and He showed me His sign,' there may be 'a veiled reference to the incident of setting up the Cross in Hades, though more probably the sign of the Cross in baptism is in the writer's mind' (Bernard, *Odes of Solomon*, *TS* viii. 3. 114). That the Cross was with Christ in Hades is seen from the *Gospel of Peter*, where it follows Him from the tomb, but it was not left there. Ephrem Syrus, *Hom.* (Lamy, i. 514), offers a better parallel. Like Jacob carrying his staff to Haran, and returning with spoils, Christ carried the sign of the Cross, the staff by which He reigns over all, through Hades. He also speaks of Christ's making the Cross a bridge over Sheol or Death, that souls might pass over it (*Hom. on our Lord*). In Pseudo-Epiphanius, *Hom.*, the Lord enters Hades bearing the conquering weapon of the Cross, and He destroyed the πύλας ἀξύλους with the ξύλῳ of the Cross (p. 193, *supra*). Ambrose speaks of the angels beholding the trophy of the Cross, whereof the government was upon His shoulder, as Christ ascended (p. 121, *supra*). In later art Christ bears what Didron calls 'the Resurrection Cross'—a symbol of the real Cross, a standard which terminates in a Cross. With this in His hand He descends into

Hades and breaks the gates. He is also depicted bearing this Resurrection Cross as He sits in Heaven (*Christian Iconography*, London, 1886, i. 385 f.). The Resurrection Cross would thus be a token, sign, or trophy of the actual Cross.

A curious quotation made by Barnabas (*Ep.* xii. 1) as from a prophet, and by Gregory of Nyssa as from Jeremiah, is possibly from the Christian apocryphal Book of Jeremiah cited by Justin and Irenæus. The passage runs: 'When a tree (of trees) hath fallen and shall rise, and when blood drops from the tree.' This is explained by Barnabas as referring to the Cross and to Christ. While Gschwind (*Niederfahrt Christi*, p. 203 f.) sees in the passage a purely Jewish eschatological reference, the tree meaning the Jewish people or remnant about to be restored, the blood-flowing a sign of the approaching end (cf. 4 Esd. iv. 4, 'when blood shall drop out of wood,' perhaps cited from the *Book of Jeremiah* by the redactor as a sign of the end), Resch, with great probability, views it as a piece of Christian symbolism for Christ and the Cross.[1] If so, the Cross is here identified with Christ: blood drops from it, it rises again. This recalls the Cross in the *Gospel of Peter* which follows Christ from the tomb and answers for Him. It is a doublet of Christ. In a Coptic fragment the star in the East appears in the form of a wheel, its figure like a Cross sending out light. Letters are written on the Cross: 'This is Jesus, the Son of God.' In another fragment, from a sermon ascribed to S. Cyril, the Cross is said to have been buried in the tomb after Christ's Resurrection. Rufus, son of Cleopas, was buried near, and his father mourned, saying that Jesus could have raised him. The Cross now comes forth, rests on Rufus' grave, restoring him to life, while Cleopas is cured of disease in the feet (Robinson, *Coptic Apoc. Gospels*, *TS* iv. 2. 165, 185).[2]

Many passages in the apocryphal *Acts* and other documents show that the Gnostics as well as many in orthodox circles regarded the Cross, whether the actual Cross or a phantasmal, mystic Cross, as Christ Himself or as His equivalent, as in the *Gospel of Peter*. This was partly due to Docetism, resulting in the idea that Christ could appear in any form, and partly to the Gnostic reverence for the Cross as a symbol of enlightenment. In the *Acts of John*

[1] Resch, *op. cit.* p. 374 f.

[2] In an Ethiopic MS. a dead body laid in Christ's tomb after His Resurrection comes to life again (James, *op. cit.* p. 152).

(cc. 98, 99), during the Crucifixion the apostle fled to the Mount of Olives, where the heavenly Æon Christ, who had left the body on the Cross, appears to him and shows him a Cross of light, about which is a great multitude, and in it another multitude, and above it the Lord Himself, not having any shape, but only a voice,[1] which says that this Cross is sometimes called Mind, Jesus, Christ, Door, Way, etc. This Cross is not that of the Crucifixion. The multitude about it is the Lower Nature: the multitude in it those who are being gathered together, *i.e.* the spiritual or Pneumatikoi, who are one with Christ, just as the Cross is one with Him.

In the account of the *Translation of Philip*, when the Athenian philosophers come with his body to the city-gate of Hierapolis, one of them appeals to the Cross to open it. This was done, and the whole city was lit up by the Cross. The people hear a voice bidding them look to the right, where they see a Cross reaching to Heaven, telling them to come to it and be enlightened. A shining form, that of Philip, was seen beside the Cross, which, as it goes upward, cries to him: 'Behold the glory of thy rest, until I come in the glory of My Father and awake thee.' The speaking Cross recalls that in the *Gospel of Peter*: it is a form of Christ (*TS* ii. 3. 162).[2]

In the *Acts of Philip* (c. 132 f.), as Philip is hung head downwards, he caused the earth to swallow his enemies. As they descend they cry for mercy, and a voice says: 'I will enlighten you in My Cross of light.' Jesus appears and rebukes Philip, then He marks with His hand a Cross in the air. It reaches down to the abyss, full of light, and is like a ladder. Jesus calls the people, and they ascend by the Cross, which is here a reduplication of Christ (cf. the Cross as a bridge over Sheol by which the dead pass to life, in Ephrem Syrus, p. 115, *supra*).

This view of Christ and His Cross as doubles may have influenced Christian art, in which the Cross is Christ or His symbol, as in early representations of the Trinity, in which a Cross appears beside the Father and the Holy Spirit (Didron, *op. cit.* i. 367, 369).

[1] Cf. the apocryphon cited by Hippolytus and Clement in connexion with the Descent.

[2] Cf. also the passage on the Cross in the Mystagogia, p. 78, *supra*. For other examples see my paper, 'The Gnostic Conception of the Cross,' in *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, 1918.

16. Page 169.

In Gk. c. 10 the thief bears a cross on his shoulder, and tells how he came bearing his cross to Paradise, where he addressed Michael. Then the flaming sword, seeing the sign of the cross, opened the gate to him.

In Latin A, c. 10, he bears the sign of the cross on his shoulder, and tells how Christ gave him the sign of the cross, which he was to show to the angel of Paradise if he forbade him to enter. This he does, and Paradise is opened to him.

In Latin B, c. 7, the robber appears in Hades just before Christ arrives. He bears a cross on his shoulder, and is asked, 'What is that which thou bearest on thy back?' but no explanation is given.

In the Hom. of Eusebius of Alexandria (Migne, *PG* lxii. 724), the saints meet the robber in Paradise. Nothing is said of his bearing a cross, but he informs them that Christ gave him the sign of the cross, which he was to show to the flaming sword if it forbade his entrance. This was done, and Paradise was opened to him. There he found Enoch and Elijah.

The accounts vary between a real cross and something which is called the 'sign of the cross,' just as in the accounts of the setting up of the Cross in Hades. The *Story of Joseph of Arimathea* (a kind of appendix to the *Acts of Pilate*, of which the earliest MS. is of the twelfth century, Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, p. lxxxi) presents an interesting parallel. The thief, Desmas, is told that he will be alone in Paradise until Christ's second coming. This Paradise is that from which Adam was ejected. He is to go to the cherubim and 'My powers the archangels,' that turn about the flaming sword, and tell them that he is to enter Paradise. This Christ also writes in a letter to the angels, saying that the thief is to enter Paradise, clothed with an incorruptible body. No one else—none of the former men—can dwell there. Joseph was imprisoned by the Jews, as in the *Acts of Pilate*, after burying Christ's body. The body of Desmas was not found; that of Gestas, the other robber, was in appearance like that of a dragon. On the evening of the first day of the week, Christ came to Joseph, with the thief on the right hand. He was released, and saw Jesus first, then the thief bringing Him a letter. From the thief came sweet fragrance. The letter is from the angel guards of Paradise,

and tells how, when they saw the marks of the nails on the robber, and ' the light of the letters of Thy Godhead,' the fire was quenched, and they were in fear, for they heard how the Maker of Heaven and earth had come to dwell on earth for the sake of Adam. They saw the spotless cross, and the robber shining with light, seven times brighter than the sun. They trembled, hearing the crying of them beneath the earth ; and the ministers of Hades with a great voice said with them : ' Holy, Holy, Holy, is He in the highest from the beginning.' Joseph goes with Christ and robber to Galilee. Christ's form was changed (*μεταμορφώθη*, transfigured), altogether light. Angels ministered to Him. Joseph remained with Him and the robber alone for three days. Then John came, and the robber disappeared. He inquires who this man was, and Christ reproaches him Does he not perceive the fragrance of Paradise ? The robber has become the heir of Paradise. The thief then appears to John, who had begged to see him. He is like a king in great power, clothed with the cross. The voice of a multitude was heard : ' Thou art come into the place of Paradise prepared for thee : we are appointed to serve thee by Him that sent thee, until the great day.' The thief and Joseph vanish, Joseph being then found in his own house (Tischendorf, pp. 459 ff.).

The cross is here wholly mystical. The robber is to be alone in Paradise, unlike the account of the saints led there in *Nicod.*

Our Lord's words, ' To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise,' raised a problem in connexion with His Descent to Hades. How could He be in Hades and Paradise at the same time ? Some, according to Origen, thought the words to be an interpolation in S. Luke. Origen suggests that before going to ' the heart of the earth,' Christ had placed the thief in Paradise (*Comm. in Joan.* xxxii. 19). S. Augustine explained the words thus. If Christ spoke them as God, then He is everywhere present. But if He spoke them as Man, and as Paradise is no part of Heaven and the Soul of Christ went to Hades, Paradise is then a part of Hades (*Ep. ad Dard.*). Gregory of Nyssa, maintaining that Paradise is not under the earth, asks how Christ could be both in Paradise and in Hades ? He solves the problem by showing that with His Body Christ was in Hades, with His Soul in Paradise, whither He led the thief, the Divinity working with both (*In Pascha et Christi Resur.*, cited in Ussher, iii. 348). Others thought that ' To-day '

should be read with 'I say,' leaving the entry to Paradise indefinite (see Thilo, p. 773).

17. Page 227.

In Jewish thought Satan is not Lord of Sheol. Uriel is over the world and Tartarus (*Enoch* xx. 2 f.), and Raphael is over the spirits of men, *i.e.* in Hades (xxii. 3, 6). In 4 Esd. iv. 35 f., souls of the righteous in their chambers, which are guarded by angels (cf. vii. 85, 95 ; 2 Bar. xxiii. 4), question the archangel Jeremiel or Remiel, who is their guardian or 'set over those who rise' (*Enoch* xx. 8). These are executors of the will of God, who is Lord of Sheol or Hades in later Jewish thought. The three passages which P. Volz (*Judische Eschatol.*, Tübingen, 1903, pp. 80, 273) cites (from *Apoc. of Abraham*, *Enoch* liii. 3, lvi. 1, and *Secrets of Enoch* xxxi. 4) as showing that Satan is ruler of the Underworld, do not bear out this assertion.

In early Christian thought, as in Jewish, Satan's rule is over this world—'prince of this world' (S. John xii. 31, cf. xiv. 30, xvi. 11), or 'god of this world' (2 Cor. iv. 4 ; cf. S. Matt. iv. 8), under whom are demons ('Beelzebub, prince of the demons,' S. Matt. xii. 24). He influences the minds of men for evil (S. Luke xxii. 3, 31 ; S. John xiii. 27 ; Acts v. 3 ; S. Mark iv. 15 ; S. Matt. xiii. 39), for he is 'the deceiver of the whole world' (Rev. xii. 9, cf. xx. 8). To him sinners are delivered for punishment in this life (1 Cor. v. 5 ; cf. 1 Tim. i. 20). His rule is in this world, and he reigns from the air ('prince of the power of the air,' Eph. ii. 2).

The passage in Heb. ii. 14 where the devil has 'the power of death' merely shows that death, the last evil, like sin, is his work. It is the result of sin and of the devil's working (Wisd. i. 13 ff., ii. 24 ; *Enoch* lxix. 11 ; 2 Bar. xvii. 3, xix. 8, xxiii. 4 ; 4 Esd. iii. 7 ; cf. Rom. v. 12). Men are in fear of it all their life. Hence the devil is shown as the author of Christ's death, which, however, begins his overthrow, just as Christ has already overcome the demons (S. Matt. xii. 28). By His Resurrection Christ has taken away the fear of death, which, though it continues, is robbed of its sting (1 Cor. xv. 55). The devil is not said to have the power of Hades. In Christ's teaching he has nothing to do with Hades, for He beholds him fall from Heaven as a result of the overpowering of the demons (S. Luke x. 18). Eternal fire is prepared for him and

his angels (S. Matt. xxv. 41). This final triumph is expressed in Rev. xx. 1 ff., and here Satan is distinguished from the personified Death and Hades, who are cast into the lake of fire (ver. 14) after they, not Satan, have given up the dead that are in them.

Harnack has shown that the 'gates of Hades' never mean the kingdom of Satan or himself and his hosts ('Der Spruch über Petrus als den Felsen der Kirche,' *Abhand. Berl. Akad. phil. hist. Klasse*, 1918, p. 638 f.).

18. Page 228.

If it were certain, as Huidekoper, p. 68 f., interprets the ambiguous passages, that Irenæus's statements about Christ's victory over Satan, binding the strong man, and spoiling his goods, *i.e.* the men claimed by him (v. 21. 3), refer to the Descent to Hades and a rescue of Adam and others from it ('vivifying that man [Adam] who had been rendered dead,' iii. 23. 1; 'man, led captive, withdrawn from his possessor's power,' v. 21. 3), there would be no doubt regarding the meaning of *erueret*, etc. But it is possible that Irenæus is here thinking of the moral effects of Christ's death, 'restoring in some way Adam's immortality' ('When the enemy in his turn was overcome, Adam recovered life,' iii. 23. 7). Huidekoper's interpretation depends partly on the theory that Satan is Lord of the Underworld, which was not entertained by the early Fathers. The 'house' and 'goods' of the strong man, Satan, were mankind, according to Irenæus (iii. 8. 2). Irenæus insists that since mankind are saved, it follows that the first-formed man should be saved (iii. 23. 2). There is no clear explanation of how he is saved, whether by enlightenment in Hades, withdrawal from it, or as a future result.

19. Page 319.

Many Old Testament passages, especially in the Psalms, were regarded by the Fathers as prophecies of the Descent, *e.g.* Ps. xvi. 10: 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol,' etc. (cf. Acts ii. 27 f.); Ps. xxii. 15: 'Thou hast brought me unto the dust of death'; Ps. xxiv. 7 ff.—the command to open the gates (of Hades); Ps. xxx. 3: 'Thou hast brought my soul from Sheol'; Ps. xxx. 9: 'What profit is there in my blood, when I go down into Sheol'; Ps. lxviii. 18: 'Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity

captive' (Origen, *in Rom.* v. 1, referring to the resurrection of the saints, S. Matt. xxvii. 52); Ps. lxxvii. 16: 'the depths (abysses) were troubled' (the powers of Hades trembled at Christ's presence); Ps. lxxxvi. 13: 'Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest pit' ('the lowest Hades,' Sept.); Ps. lxxxviii. 3 f.: 'My life draweth nigh unto Sheol . . . free among the dead'; Ps. cvii. 16 (with Isa. xlv. 2): 'He hath broken the gates of brass,' etc.; Hos. vi. 2: 'After two days will he revive us,' etc., xiii. 14: 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave. O Death, where,' etc.; Zech. ix. 11 f.: 'I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit,' etc.; Isa. xlv. 3: 'I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places' (see Additional Note, p. 336); Isa. xlix. 9: 'To them that are bound, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves.'

INDEX

(Italic numerals show that the reference is to a note on the page cited.)

Abraham, 278 ff.
Abraham's Bosom, 123, 261, 264, 266 ff., 271 f., 278 f.
Abraham, Testament of, 278.
Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew, 149.
— *of Andrew and Paul*, 148.
— *of Callistratus*, 130, 200, 233.
— *of Eustratius*, 205.
— *of John*, 150, 215, *235*.
— *of Paul and Thecla*, 34, 235.
— *of Peter*, 214.
— *of Philip*, 281.
— *of Pilate*, 153.
— *of Thomas*, 35, 140 f., 208–9, *233*, *242*, 299, 301–2, 305.
— *of Xantippe*, 129.
Adam, 94, 96, 106, 109, 115, 123, 130, 145, 147, 162, 169, 180, 184, 194, 254, 261, 273, 277, 299, 337 ff.
Æneas, 24.
Æon Christ, 208, 301, 310.
Ages of the world, 332.
Ahura Mazda, 236.
Alcestis, 18, 281.
Alexandrian Jews, 276, 313.
Ambrose, S., 120 f., 256, 270, 290.
Amente, 9, *222*, *309*, *265*, 267.
Anaphora of Pilate, 142 ff., *242*, 293.
Ancellus, poem on Descent, 36.
Andaman Islanders, 2.
Angels, fallen, 55 f.
—, Incarnation hid from, 200.
—, in Descent, 330.
Angra Mainyu, 236.
Aphraates, 115 f.
Apocalypse of Baruch, *34*, 226.
— *of Moses*, 33, 157, 275.
— *of Paul*, 34, 37, 275, 279.
— *of Peter*, 11, 39.
— *of Zephaniah*, 34, 279.
Apollinarianism, 73, 154.
Apostolic Constitutions, 74, 271.
Aquinas, 50.
Aralû, 218–19.
Archons, 142, 150, 213, 239, 301.
Ascension of Isaiah, 55, 136 f., 200, 210, 294, 304.
Assumption of Moses, 236.
— *of the Virgin*, *235*.
Ascent to Heaven, stories of, 4.
Athanasius, 79, 109 f., 255.
Atzberger, L., 265.
Augustine, S., 6, 254.
— on Abraham's Bosom, 261, 272.
— on Cessation of Torments, 38.
— on Descent, 122 ff.
— on Petrine passages, 50, 57.
— on Rescue from Hades, 255 f.
— on Resurrection of Saints, 296.
Australian beliefs, 2 f.
Avalokiteśvara, 29, 250.
Azazel, 236.

Balder, 9, 26.
Baptism and Descent, 108, 133, 248.
— for dead, 248.
— in Hades, 246 f.
Bardaisan, 303.
Barlaam and Josaphat, 275.
Baruch, 237, 276, 284.
Basilides, 209, 301.
Beausobre, *158*.
Beliar, 145, 234, 238, 283.
Benedicite, *82*.
Bereshit Rabba, 31, 251, 284.
Bernard, Dr., 133.
Boniface, S., 259.
Book of Jubilees, 237.
— *of the Dead*, 18.
— *of the Resurrection*, 146 f., 222, 256.
Bousset, W., 207, 227, 321.
Brandan, S., 36.
Brandt, W., 220.
Bridge of the Dead, 6, 10 f., 32.
Buddha, 29.

Cæsarius of Arles, 72, 196, *233*.
Cæsarius of Heisterbach, 38.
Carpocratians, 301.
Celsus, 105, 241.
Cheyne, Prof., 282, 321.
Chiliasts. *See* Millenarianism.
Christ, as the Door, Way, etc., 225 f.
—, change of form, 135, 207 f., 212 f., 214.
—, preaching in Hades, 240 ff.
—, subject to law of death, 93, 240.
—, trampling on Death, 230 f.
Chrysostom, S., 174, 233, 249, *283*.
Church Order, Egyptian, etc., 74 ff., 247.
Clemen, C., 321.
Clement, Irish monk, 259.
Clement, S., 97 ff., 215, 242, 246, 255, 290.

Codex Bobiensis, 288.
Comparative religion, 320.
Conybeare, F. C., *130*, 153.
Cosmocrator, 304.
Creeds, 67 f., 218, 230–1.
Cross in Hades, 114 f., 134, 157, 168 f., 281, 334 ff., 339 ff.
— penitent thief and, 343.
Cyprian, S., 39, 94 f., 242, 299.
Cyril, S., of Alexandria, 128, 256.
Cyril, S., of Jerusalem, 126 f., 200, 290.

Dante, 5, 11, 173, 260 f.
Dead, vision of, 2f.
Death personified, 146 f., 224, 227.
Descent to Hades, in Acts, 63.
— —, in Apocryphal writings, 130 ff.
— —, in Apostolic writings, 45 ff.
— —, in Asia Minor, 66.
— —, in *Church Order*, 74 ff.
— —, in Creeds, 67 ff.
— —, in Gnosticism, 149, 300 ff.
— —, in *Gospel of Nicodemus*, 152 ff.
— —, in *Homily* of Epiphanius, 193.
— —, in *Homilies* of Eusebius, 174 ff.
— —, origin of tradition, 312 ff., 321.
— —, value of, 321 ff.
Descent myths and Christ's Descent, 1, 105.
— —, burlesques of, 7, 9, 11.
— —, origin of, 4.
Descent to free the damned, 28 ff.
— to obtain a boon, 21 ff.
— to rescue a dead person, 13 ff.
Dialogue of Adamantius, 245.
Didascalia, 69, 78 f., 248.
Dionysus, 18.
Dives and Lazarus, 312.
Dobschütz, E. von, 154, 184.
Docetism, 209 f.
Dragon, 132, 141, 144, 239, 328.
Dream and trance, 3, 8 ff.
— of Hades, 5 ff., 8.
Duat, 9, 218, 226.

Ebionites, 157.
Ecclesiasticus, 251.
Enlightenment in Hades, 248, 316.
Enoch and Elijah, 112, 169, 183, 264, 273.
Enoch, Book of, *34*, *59*, 236, 250, 275, 314.
Enoch, Slavonic *Book of*, *34*, 219, 237, 275, 284, 314.
Ephrem Syrus, 111 ff., 199.
Epiphanius, 192 ff., *233*, 244, 293.
Epistle of Pilate, 144.
Epistle of the Apostles, 39, 66, 101, 135, 137, 200, 212, 246.
Eschatology, Christian, 261 f.
—, Jewish, 213 ff.
—, Persian, 236.
Esdras, 237, 270, 275, 284.
Eucharist, 77, 92.
Eurydice, 281.
Eusebius of Alexandria, 174 ff., 199, 244–5.
Eusebius of Cæsarea, 110.
Eusebius of Emesa, 174.
Eve, 115, 147, *148*.
Evodius, 64, 256, 258.

Firmicus Maternus, 118 f., 211, 229.
Food of Hades, 42 f., 304.
Fravashis, 304.

Gates of Hades. *See* Hades.
Gehinnom, 31, 284.
Gilgames, 25.
Glaber, R., 36.
Gnostics, 149, 156 f., 207, 220, 239, 263, 277, 300 ff., 341.
Golden Legend, 41, 173.
Golgotha, 338.
Gospel of Bartholomew, *242*.
— *of Nicodemus*, 152 ff., 172 f., 184 ff., 199, 205, 217, *235*, 243–5, 248, 257, 291.
— *of Peter*, 64, 134 f., 289, 297.
Gregory of Nazianzen, 203, 259.
Gregory of Nyssa, 203.
Gregory Thaumaturgos, 108.
Gregory the Great, 6, 10, 40, 205, 259
Gschwind, K., 54 f., 57, *96*, *102*, 286, 297.
Gunkel, H., 321.

Hades, 218, 261, 269.
—, entrances to, 3, 15.
—, faithful still go there, 262 ff.
—, gates of, 217 ff., 333.
—, Gnostic, 300 f.
—, in Art, 225.
—, keys of, 336.
—, light in, 248 f., 331.
—, Pagan, 9.
—, personified, 145, 160 ff., 224, 336.
—, treasures of, 336.
Harnack, 213, 336.
Harris, J. Rendel, 53.
Harrison, J., 4.
Harrowing of Hell, 173.
Heaven, gates of, 333.

Heavenly Jerusalem, 290 f.
Heavens, 208, 210 ff., 301 ff.
Hebrews, Epistle to, 48, 235.
Hell, as a monster, 225.
—, escape from torments of, 37, 40, 44.
Heracleon, *150*.
Heracles, 18, 19, 25, 281.
Hermódr, 19.
Herodotus, 23.
Hibil Ziwâ, 26, 207, 219, 282, 300, 306.
Hilary of Poitiers, S., 126, 241, 270.
Hippolytus, 95 f., 228, 240, 244, 255, 269, 274, 301.
Hippolytus, Canons of, 74.
History of John, 144, 207, 294.
History of Philip, 207.
Holy City, 288 ff.
Honorius of Autun, S., 37.
Hymn of the Pearl, 209, 239, 302.

Ignatius, 66, 83 f., 200, 298.
Illumination, 247.
Incarnation hidden, 200 f.
Initiation rites, *4*.
Intercession for the dead, 33 f., 38 f.
Irenæus, 66, 87 ff., 202, 211, 214, 227, 234, 240, 247, 263 f.
Ištar and Tammuz, 16, 219, 281.

Jeremiah apocryphon, *65*, 76, 84, 88 f., 251, 297.
Jerome, S., 125, 270.
Jerome, Faith of, 71 f.
Jews, devil and, 157, 176, 179.
John Baptist, S., 103, 162, 175, 181, 244 f., 261.
John Damascene, S., 205.
John, S., writings of, 66, 235.
Judas, 36, 147–8, *256*, 257.
Justin Martyr, 48, 66, 84, 262.

Kalevala, 22.
Kamtchadals, 2.
Karshipta, 250.
Kattenbusch, F., 68.
Keys of Hades, 49, 233, 336.
Kriṣṇa, 19.

Lactantius, 270.
Lalita Vistara, 29.
Lazarus, 164, 177, 290, 332.
Left and right hands, 78, 327.
Leo, Pope, 204.
Leucius Charinus, 158.
Light in Hades, 133, 248 f., 331.
Limbus Patrum, 53, 257, 260.
Lipsius, R. A., 153, 156, *158*, 184.
Loofs, F., 48, *124*, 298, 321.
Looking back, 44.

Macarius Magnes, 204.
Mândâ d'Hajè, 27, 306.
Mandæans, 26, 207, 218, 282, 300.
Marcion, 65, 66, 86 f., 151, 206, 254, 268, 301.
Martin of Bracara, 68.
Medicine-man, power of, 7 ff.
Melito, 231.
Messiah, 31, 238, 285, 314.
Methodius, 273.
Michael, S., 145, 169 f.
Millenarianism, 271, 286 f.
Mimir's Grove, 277.
Muhammadan beliefs, 32, 37.
Mystagogia, 77 f., 200.
Mysteries, 8 f.
Mysterious land in East, 277.
Mystery plays, 173.
Myths, Babylonian, 16, 25, 43, 218, 238, 282.
—, Buddhist, 20, 29, 250, 282 f.
—, Chinese, 23, 30.
—, Egyptian, 23, 32, 42, 218, 225, 238, 304.
—, Greek, 17, 24, 42, 218, 238.
—, Hindu, 19, 24, 28, 42, 250, 282.
—, Japanese, 6, 15, 23.
—, Lower Culture, 2 ff., 5 ff., 13 ff., 21 ff., 42–3.
—, Mandæan, 26, 218–19, 282.
—, Persian, 236, 238, 250, 277, 304.
—, Scandinavian, 19, 26, 42, 277.

Naassenes, 301.
Name, power of, 210.
Nergal, 25.
Novatian, 270.

Odes of Solomon, 117, 131 ff., 201.
Odin, 26.
Odysseus, 24.
Oil of Mercy, 157, 162, 321.
Old Testament passages and Descent, 94, 95, 103, 221 f., 226, 237, 252, 316, 346 f.
Ophites, 208.
Orcagna, 11.
Orfeo and Heurodis, 18.
Origen, 103 ff., 201 ff., 212, 215, 228, 230, 255, 274, 290.
Original sin, 254.
Orpheus, 4, 17 f., 32, 281.
Orphism, 42.

Other World, visits or visions, 2 ff.
Owain, Descent of, 12.

Paradise, 122, 157, 169, 180 ff., 195, 262, 264, 267, 280, 313 f., 344.
—, earthly, 274, 276 f.
—, situation of, 273 ff.
Patrick's Purgatory, S., 11.
Paul, S., on Descent, 45 f., 243.
—, on conquest of Satan, 234.
Pearson, Bishop, 50.
Perpetua, S., 10, 34, 248.
Persephone, 18.
Peter, S., on Descent, 50 ff., 242, 256.
Pfleiderer, O., 219, 282, 300, 321.
Philaster, 258.
Pistis Sophia, 150, 208, 226, 301, 309.
Plumptre, E. H., 60, 322.
Polycarp, S., 84.
Prayers for dead, 33 ff.
Preaching in Hades, Apostles', 245 f.
— —, Christ's, 240 ff.
— —, S. John Baptist's, 243 f.
Presbyter of Irenæus, 66, 87 f., 101, 264, 266.
Probus, 260.
Prudentius, 35, 117.
Psyche, 24.
Purgatory, 37 f., 40, 272.

Quadratus, 289.
Questions of S. Bartholomew, 145, 294.
Quicunque Vult, 73.

Ra, boat of, 218, 226.
Ransom to Satan, 200 ff.
Release of souls, 253 ff., 286, 329.
Remission of pains in Other World, 32 ff.
Resch, A., 89, 289, 297.
Resurrection, Jewish, 251.
— of saints, 286 ff.
Revelation on Descent, 49.
Rufinus, 67, 69, 71, *204*.

Satan, deception of, 199 ff.
—, not lord of Underworld, 227, 229, 232 f., 345.
Saturninus, 239.
Saturus, S., 10, 274, 291.
Schmidt, C., 89, *102*, 264, 266.
Seth, 162, 184, 321.
Sethians, 301.
Sheol, 219, 226, 251, 275, *276*, 312.
Shepherd of Hermas, 85, 97, 101, 235, 246.
Sibylline Oracles, 39, 139.
Simeon, 249.
Simonians, 208, 301.
Sleep, death as, 297, 319.
Soul of Christ among souls, 57, 96, 105, 330.
Souls, ascent of, *311*.
Spoiling of strong man, 234 f., 346.
Story of Peter and Paul, 145, 294.
Synesius, 80, 118.

Talismans, 157.
Talmud, 33.
Tammuz, 281.
Tartarus, 218.
Teaching of Addai, 69, 130, 140, 257, 298.
Tertullian, 10, 38, 93 f., 217, 240, 266, 273.
Testament of Abraham, 34.
— *of Our Lord*, 74, 76 f., 92, 200 f.
— *of XII Patriarchs*, 18, 138, *222*, 234, 236, 275, 283, 296.
Thaddeus, Acts of, 139 f. See also *Teaching of Addai*.
Theodicy, 62, *91*, 98, 101, 315.
Theodotus, 150, 308.
Theophilus, 273.
Theseus, 18.
Thief, penitent, 130, 157, 169, 182 f., 343 f.
Tischendorf, L., 153.
Trajan, 40 f.
Tree of Cross, 157, 193, 334 f.
Tree of Life, 104, 121, 157, 180, 195, 275, 284, 332, 335.
Tylor, E. B., 4.

Underworld in Pagan myths, 2 f., 5, 9, 218.
Utnapishtim, 25.

Valentinian Gnostics, *147*, 207, 277, 310
Venantius Fortunatus, 129, 254.
Virgin as intercessor, 41.
Visio Pauli, 37.
Voice in Hades, 242.

Warders of Hades, 217, 222.

Yalkut Shim'oni, 31, 284.
Yama, 19, 28.
Yima, 250, 277.

Zahn, T., 68, 102.
Zarathustra, 250.

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